

AUGUSTA DENBEIGH;

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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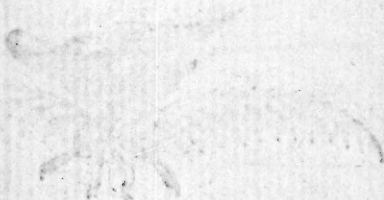
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AUGUSTA DENBEIGH.

CHAP. I.

IN a small village, situated on the declivity of a deep glen, in North Wales, a Clergyman of a noble family in England, had for some time taken up his residence. Disappointments of various sorts, had rendered

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him

him so dissatisfied with the great world, that almost at the meridian of life, he had formed the extraordinary resolution of abandoning society, for which he had ceased to experience any other sensation, than that of disgust. His wish for obscurity, could not have been more fully gratified: The high surrounding mountains, covered either with heath, or presenting views of the most sterile rocks, repressed the curiosity of those few who travel for observation, and none could be led thither from other motives.

The torrents that fell from these mountains, had fertilized a small valley, over which they reared their projecting heads; on the side stood about a dozen huts, the vicarage house and the church, which in more improved parts of the country, might easily have been mistaken for some other building. In separating himself from the world, Mr. Euston could not forget those duties, which choice had imposed upon him; and

and as his mind was active, and his religion unaffected, his plan would have been incomplete, without the care of a small flock. To these he dispensed both plenty and cheerfulness, the one, by instructing them how to cultivate their land, the other by disposing their minds to benevolence. He defined happiness to consist, in the constant pursuit of interesting employments; and as his sources of amusement, were not various, his success was proportioned to the avidity of his perseverance: hence his little territory seemed a blooming Eden, amidst the dreary waste.

General consent seems to have excluded the inhabitants of cities, from one of the most sublime enjoyments of nature, the contemplation of the rising sun, whose glorious animating beams afford to the humble cottager, cause of admiration, wonder, and delight. Mr. Euston seldom suffered its first rays to

gild the tops of the opposite mountains, before he had tasted the refreshing breath of the morning air. As usual, he had left his bed early, and was proceeding to a little garden, at the front of his house, when on opening the door, he perceived a deal box in which an infant was laid, who appeared fast asleep. Involuntary surprise fixed him for some moments to the spot he stood on; he almost doubted the reality of what he saw, and to convince himself, took the sleeping child gently in his arms; it became roused by his caresses, and awaking in great good humour, smiled upon its new nurse. His emotions of surprise, now gave way to a sort of tenderness he had never felt before, and he imprinted a kiss on the soft cheek of the little cherub, who set up a cry, as if offended at the freedom; the noise brought the housekeeper into the hall, to whom Mr. Euston awkwardly enough, held out his little burden.

“ Bless us, sir,” said she, taking the infant

fant from him, "where did this sweet baby come from?"

"I know not," answered Mr. Euston, "I found it at the door."

"At the door! exclaimed Mrs. Davey."

"In this box, replied he, without any covering, and fast asleep; therefore it is evident it could not have lain there long."

"And what does your honour intend to do, cried Mrs. Davey, la, fir! I warrant the parents are of good account, for the child is not in the sort of cloaths used by the people of this country."

"Do! said Mr. Euston, why take care of the little creature, to be sure."

The cries of the infant now became more loud, and Mrs. Davey conveyed it into the kitchen, where she soon procured some warm

milk and bread, which it eat very readily. Mr. Euston could not help following the housekeeper, and whilst she gave it food, stood by her with his arms folded, in an attitude of deep thought.

"It was a lovely girl about seven months old.

"What shall we do for cloaths, said Mr. Euston?"

"Perhaps, sir, replied Mrs. Davey, there are some in the box."

"True, answered he, I will go and examine."

The conjecture of Mrs. Davey was right; the linen the child was laid upon, consisted of apparel made plain, but of very fine materials. The sight of these again excited the curiosity of Mrs. Davey.

"Won't

"Won't your honour, try to find out who brought the child here, said she?"

"What signifies that, answered Mr. Euston, rather more peevishly than he was used to speak, "the parents have no doubt, good reasons for concealing it, and there are none why I should not accept the trust they have reposed in me."

The infant now began to solicit his notice, by a playfulness peculiar to its age, "Davey, said he, in a softened tone of voice, do not fatigue yourself with attending to this little charge, but provide one of the peasants daughters, who will be able to nurse it under your direction." With this injunction he left her, and pursued his morning walk.

He traversed the fields with hasty steps, regardless of the objects, which used to engage his attention, for his thoughts were totally absorbed by this strange incident, and

reflection, instead of composing him, added to his perplexity. The only conjecture he could form was, that some one who knew him, and had traced out his retirement, had consigned to his humanity for a time, the charge he had received, and his resolutions ended as they had began, in a fixed determination to take care of the child.

In the state of uncertainty in which Mr. Euston remained, respecting the baptism of the little girl, he held it right to perform that ceremony, and bestowed upon it the name of Augusta, to which he afterwards added that of Denbeigh.—

His days were now become of double value, for the engaging disposition and companionable qualities of Augusta, had so entirely gained his affections, that her education employed his whole attention for two or three years. He had been in some sort of expectation, that the obscurity of her birth would be
done

done away; but now, if he thought at all about it, it was with fear, lest any explanation should arise which might deprive him of his protégée.

In the early part of his life, Mr. Euston had made great proficiency in most of those accomplishments, which become a young man of fashion. He spoke Italian and French with fluency, had studied the rules for drawing under the first masters, and was eminently distinguished for his fine execution, on several musical instruments. He had a small Piano Forté and a Violin, and generally closed his evenings, with the sweet and soothing touches of harmony. Solicitous to store the mind of his darling Augusta, with the same resources as he himself possessed, he ventured on the arduous task of becoming her preceptor. Her genius however was so quick, and her retentive faculties so strong, that nothing seemed difficult to her; and at the age of fifteen, she might almost be called

an adept, in whatever she had attempted to learn. These studies had not led Mr. Euston to neglect those of higher importance, for he had principally aimed to give her mind a turn for reflection, and to encourage the generous propensities of her feeling heart. He had inspired her with a taste for the simple pleasures of life, which frequently excite the most sublime ideas ; thus their rambles thro' the fields were rendered interesting, by the examination of plants, whose structure exhibit such wonderful marks of the divine creator, as cannot fail of impressing the soul, with the strongest sentiments of piety and adoration. Nor did he neglect to bring her acquainted, with the system of that extraordinary man, who with a felicity of judgement peculiar to himself, has discovered the organization of every plant, and assigned to each the rank which they actually hold, in the vegetable world.

Thus serenely passed the days of Augusta
and

and her father, for so she had been permitted to call him, until the death of the good old Mrs. Davey, interrupted for a time, the happiness they experienced. —

CHAP. II.

SOMETIMES with Mr. Denbeigh was employed in observing his labours, Augusta would extend her work, and climb up the rugged ascents of the rock, would be encumbered with the glowing times, which the late rays of the setting sun would throw upon the adjacent mountains. One evening late in August, she had ventured upon the shore, and was busily employed in collecting a beautiful specimen of shells, when her little dog, who was her only companion, began to bark, and the instant the two gentlemen were

C H A P. II.

SOMETIMES whilst Mr. Euston was employed in observing his labourers, Augusta would extend her walk, and climbing up the rugged ascents of the rock, would sit enchanted with the glowing tints, which the last rays of the setting sun, would throw upon the adjacent mountains. One evening late in August, she had ventured farther than usual, and was busily employed in collecting a beautiful specimen of moss, when her little dog, who was her only companion, began to bark, and she instantly saw two pointers rush thro'

thro' the heath to seize him ; they attacked him so furiously, that she durst not attempt his rescue, and whilst she stood a distressed spectatress of the combat, a figure presented himself before her, who almost diverted her attention from Fidele, so different was his appearance from any thing she had ever seen before ; nor was the stranger less surprised than herself ; but his feelings arose from an opposite cause, the involuntary admiration which real beauty never fails to inspire. How long each might have indulged their different emotions, or what might have been the fate of poor Fidele, is difficult to say, had not another gentleman arrived, who called off the dogs ; when Augusta snatching up her little favourite in her arms, sprang into a narrow path, and was out of sight in a moment. She was not long in reaching Mr. Euston's habitation ; and as soon as she could recover her breath, began to relate the adventure she had met with, " my little Fidele's danger, said she, was cause sufficient for
alarm,

alarm, but indeed my dear sir, the man's appearance terrified me also." Here she entered upon the description of it, and Mr. Euston much diverted, discovered that this grotesque being, was some gentleman habited in a shooting dress.

Whilst they were conversing thus, two servants with led horses approached the door. Such an unusual sight threw Augusta into fresh agitation, and surprised even Mr. Euston, who went himself to learn their business. They informed him that Lord Euston and Mr. Devereux, had been taking the diversion of grouse shooting upon the hills, and that the former wished to pay his duty to him, and entreated the favour of lodgings, for himself and his friend.

Mr. Euston returned with haste to Augusta, who since the death of Mrs. Davey, had superintended his little family; "two very unexpected visitors are arrived, my love
said

said he, the one is my nephew Lord Euston, and they mean to pass the night here. Will you give such orders, as you think necessary for their accommodation?"

Augusta lost not a moment in complying with this request, and had but just quitted the hall, as the two gentlemen entered it.

The meeting was rather awkward on both sides, for although the benevolence of Mr. Euston's heart was too great, for him to feel any displeasure against a nephew, whom he had never before seen, yet so many instances of his brother's unkindness, rushed at once upon his mind, that he was more passive than cordial, in receiving the embraces of Lord Euston, who, as there was a spectator of their interview, felt no small share of embarrassment, at the coolness of his reception. He at length presented his friend, and added, that as they were so near the habitation of an uncle, to whom he had long wished to pay
his

his duty, he could not prevail upon himself to renounce the gratification.

Such an affectionate appellation, which had never before met his ears, vibrated thro' the whole frame of Mr. Euston, and with a similar effect to the sweet modulations of harmony, banished every discordant passion from his soul. He now caught Lord Euston in his arms, and gave such a welcome to his friend as charmed both.

The gentlemen now produced the game they had killed, and refusing any refreshment before supper, except that arising from a change of apparel, Mr. Euston conducted them to apartments for that purpose.

Lord Euston was in his twentieth year; he was good humoured, lively and thoughtless, and had a countenance which expressed as much. He had considerable degree of ease, and fashion in his manner, and nothing threw
him

him under restraint but the severity of his father, who was so anxious for a dignity of deportment, in the representative of his family, that they seldom agreed when they were together, which was not very often. He was not devoid of feeling, but it was only called forth, upon extraordinary occasions; thus his meeting with his uncle, had affected him for the moment, because it was a scene altogether new to him; and thus, the charms of Augusta had made a great impression on his heart, because he had never before beheld such unadorned beauty.

Perhaps Augusta had never looked more lovely, than on the very evening, when chance had first produced their rencontre: Her figure was of that graceful sort, which a simple style of dress displays to the utmost advantage; and her anxiety for the safety of Fidele, had given an expression of tenderness to her fine features, which made them almost irresistible; Lord Euston had not
ceased

ceased to reproach himself for having suffered her to escape, or to make encomiums on her beauty to his friend Mr. Devereux, who had been at too great a distance to observe her so much, and whose attention had been chiefly taken up, in endeavouring to extricate the little animal from the fury of his assailants.

Mr. Devereux was second son to the Earl of Sunderne; his person was uncommonly elegant, and there was a sort of intelligence in his countenance, which interested every one who beheld him. He possessed a gentleness of manners which was free from insipidity, and when he spoke, it was with a degree of animation which convinced his hearers, that he possessed the energy of a noble mind.

When the gentlemen returned to the study, they found Augusta with Mr. Euston, who presenting them to her, said, "This is my Augusta."

Lord

Lord Euston in the exuberance of his joy at seeing her again, exclaimed, "Indeed! is this lovely creature my cousin?"

This question involved Mr. Euston in a difficulty, he had never before thought of; however, with admirable presence of mind, he replied, "If I do not present her to you as a cousin, I at least may venture to present her, as one of the most valuable of her sex."

An inquiry after her dog, who lay by her with one of his feet bound up, first convinced Augusta of what she almost doubted, that these were the same persons she had met on the mountain, so great was the transformation produced by dress.

"I hope he is not hurt much," said Mr. Devereux, taking him gently from the floor.

"I fear he is, replied Augusta, for he will not bear me to touch his foot, and does not attempt

tempt to stir from the place where I lay him down."

"Oh! if his leg be broke, said Lord Euston, laughingly, Devereux I dare say can set it."

"I should certainly wish, and would try, to repair the injury I had in part occasioned, answered Mr. Devereux, but I believe Madam, I can relieve your apprehensions on that account, for the leg is only bruised.

Here supper was announced, and Mr. Euston telling his guests that he hoped they were sportsmen sufficient, to live on the produce of their guns, for that his habitation supplied little variety, conducted them to the eating room.

After supper was over, the conversation took a very lively turn, in which as the subjects were adapted to Augusta, she sustained her part, with ease to herself; for although
this

this might be termed her first introduction to a party, she felt no embarrassment, where she was conscious of committing no impropriety. Mr. Euston beheld the way in which she acquitted herself, with inexpressible delight, for he had not until then, made such anxious observations, on the sweetness and dignity of her manners, and had too much humility to know how large a portion, she must have imbibed from himself. He told his visitors, that they generally devoted an hour to musick every evening, and Lord Euston seizing Augusta by the hand, placed her at the piano fort ; he was rapturous in his commendations of her performance, "But will you not sing?" said he.

"We have none of the fashionable airs of the present day, said Mr. Euston, but Augusta will give you some old ballad, which I selected in former times."

Her voice, naturally full, sweet and pathetic,

tic, gave great force to the subject she had chosen, and when she had finished it, and rose from her seat, she perceived Mr. Devereux still gazing upon her, with a melancholy attention; this threw her into some little confusion, and she seized the moment of general silence, to bid them good night.

On their separation, the mind of each individual was deeply, tho' variously employed. Mr. Euston had not failed to observe the admiration, which the beauty and accomplishments of Augusta had excited; nor did the curiosity of Lord Euston, to discover who she was, escape his notice. He saw the necessity of imparting something of her history, but how to do it, without wounding her delicacy, gave him no small distress.

Augusta had retired with *her* thoughts, more busily employed than they had ever been before. The highly polished manners of the strangers, their respectful attentions, and

and apparent admiration of her, were alike new, flattering and pleasing. She began to wonder why Mr. Euston, had abandoned such society, and indulged herself in conjectures, until a sweet slumber put an end to them.

Lord Euston did not once close his eyes, he assured himself that he was distractedly in love with Augusta; that he could not live without her; and resolved not to quit his present abode, until he had learnt what her situation with respect to his uncle really was.

Mr. Devereux's waking moments were differently employed; surprise was almost the predominant passion which he felt. In a spot where he expected to find only a severe recluse, he had met with beauty, elegance, and such refined sentiments, as were exactly congenial with his own taste. He regretted that a character so formed to delight, and improve the world as Mr. Euston, should have had
cause

cause to become a voluntary exile from it; and when he contemplated the lot of Augusta, connected as it seemed to be, with the choice of Mr. Euston, he could not help lamenting, that such charms were to be buried in obscurity.

Mr. Euston kept his chamber much later than usual, knowing well that his guests, would not abandon theirs at an early hour. He was however soon joined by them, after he had reached his garden, and on receiving some compliments from Mr. Devereux, on his romantic situation, and the high state of culture it was in, he replied, "It is in truth a spot endeared to me from the recollection, that during the forty years I have resided on it, I have met with no one circumstance, which could give me real pain. The peasants who are my tenants, regard me with affection; but Augusta, and his eyes filled with tears, is the solace of my age; then turning to Lord Euston, he continued, she is not your
cousin,

cousin, but the child of misfortune, and my adopted daughter."

Lord Euston caught hold of his hand, and would have said something, but his lips denied him utterance. Mr. Devereux likewise, was too much affected to attempt to speak, and breakfast was announced, at a moment favourable to the feelings of each.

The inquiries of Augusta, soon restored general cheerfulness, and during the repast Mr. Euston said to her, "How my love, shall we be able to prevail upon our friends to prolong their stay?"

"I know not, replied she smiling, unless they are as much tired of gayety, as we are delighted with the interruption they occasion to our solitude."

"I, cried Lord Euston eagerly, shall quit this place with so much regret, that I cannot

be sufficiently grateful for the prolongation of my felicity, in receiving permission to stay some time with you."

"And I, said Mr. Devereux, looking alternately at Mr. Euston and Augusta, have not found in any place in busy life, such requisites to happiness, as these tranquil scenes afford."

"Well then, replied Mr. Euston, you must pursue the sports of the field by yourselves, for to those I cannot accompany you, and when you are tired return to me and Augusta."

CHAP. III.

LORD Euston and Mr. Devereux, had passed a week in this delightful abode of peace and simplicity, when the engagements of the latter demanded his departure, "You, Euston, said he, seem to have forgot that the world contains any other inhabitants, than what are to be found on this little spot ; and disposed as I am, to grant them the pre-eminence their characters entitle them to, yet I must listen to those claims, which require my presence elsewhere."

C 2

"I do

“ I do not suppose, replied Lord Euston, in a dejected tone of voice, that my uncle will think it right, to urge me to stay longer than you do ; therefore, as you have penetrated into the real state of my heart, I expect from your friendship, all the indulgence you can give ; do not, I beseech you, tear me from hence, until you can no longer delay it ? ”

“ That period, said Mr. Devereux, with some emotion, is arrived, and I can remain here no longer than to-morrow morning. ”

The entrance of Mr. Euston interrupted the conversation, who perceiving evident marks of discontent in the countenance of his nephew, could not forbear inquiring the cause.

“ It is a melancholy one to me, answered Lord Euston, for we were talking of leaving you to-morrow. ”

“ If indispensable motives require it, said

Mr. Euston, it would neither be polite nor friendly in me to solicit you farther, and the flattering indications of regret, which I perceive, incline me to believe, that you would not else adopt the resolution; all I shall therefore say, is, that when the return of summer again holds forth to you an inducement, to visit this solitary region, you will make me most truly happy, by repeating the favour of your visit."

Mr. Devereux bowed in silence, but Lord Euston could not conceal his chagrin: "What," said he, uncle, when we are so miserable about leaving you, do you not ask us to return before next summer?"

Mr. Devereux prevented an immediate reply, "Be assured my dear sir, said he, taking Mr. Euston's hand which he pressed with energy, that the hours I have passed here, are too precious to my remembrance, for me to neglect the permission you have given me,

to visit you again; it is probable I shall not return from the continent, where I am going, long before the time you mention; and I shall not think I have acquitted myself, of all the duties I owe my native country, until I have paid my respects to you."

The evening was uncommonly fine, and as the idea of a separation had infected the whole party, with mutual sensations of regret, Mr. Euston proposed they should take a long walk, and try to divert their thoughts, by a view of the sublime scenery around them. He conducted them by the side of the stream, to a valley so fearfully narrow, that it seemed rather a chasm, rent asunder in the rocks, by some violent operation of nature. Here, whilst they were observing the vast fragments, which hung impending over their heads, Lord Euston found means to detach Augusta from their companions, "I am about to quit you, said he, but I cannot do it without telling you, that I love you to distraction."

Augusta's cheeks glowed with a higher vermilion tint, than they had ever done before, and she stepped hastily forward.

"You are displeased with me, continued he, and I am miserable."

"How can I be otherwise than displeased with you, said Augusta, since you thus try to efface all the favourable impressions which your former behaviour, would have left upon my memory?"

"Let me but hope, replied he, that you do entertain some favourable sentiments for me, and I will cherish them, even by my silence, if that be your wish?"

"Mistake me not, answered Augusta, the sentiments I do and only can feel for you, are those which are your due, as the nephew of my revered benefactor."

“Cruel Augusta! cried Lord Euston dejectedly, is it that your heart is insensible, or does some happier man——”

“I will answer you with sincerity, sir, replied Augusta, and spare you the conclusion of your inquiries. I know not whether my heart be insensible, but I am sure it has felt no such attachment, as that you allude to; and with equal truth I may add, it will never be a gift I can bestow upon your Lordship. If inclination did not decide thus for me, how could you ever suppose I would repay the paternal obligations I owe to Mr. Euston, by receiving the clandestine addresses of his nephew?”

“Call them not clandestine,—consent but to suspend your rejection, until in the face of the whole world, I may lay my title and my fortune at your feet, cried Lord Euston.”

“No, my Lord, said Augusta, for even then,

then, I would prove that I had attended to the precepts of your noble uncle, and save you, from an action unworthy of yourself." As she spoke this, she quickened her steps, and joined Mr. Euston and Mr. Devereux.

The shades of evening now fell around them, and reminded them that it was time to return home. The dashing of the water along a channel, obstructed by large masses of rock, was heard more distinctly in the dead silence of approaching night; whilst the summits of the craggy hills, almost receding from the sight, presented a thousand fantastic forms to their imaginations.

As they approached the house, Mr. Devereux said to Augusta, "The grandeur of the scene I have just beheld, can never be effaced from my memory; and the pleasures of this day, can only be equalled by the sufferings which to-morrow will bring. Perhaps the moment of bidding you adieu, Madam, may

be too,—perhaps I may not then be able to wish to that excellence I so much revere, all the felicity which ought to be its portion.”

He then bowed upon her hand; and Augusta was too much affected with this respectful adieu, to attempt making any reply.

It was agreed that the gentlemen should set out early in the morning, to avoid the repetition of a parting scene: The evening closed without their once thinking of musick, and at a late hour they retired to their apartments.

CHAP. IV.

THE departure of his guests, left Mr. Euston's mind, in a state of much discomposure. Happy in the filial affection of Augusta, he had never looked forward to the moment of losing her; but the admiration her beauty had now received, and the too visible partiality of his nephew, had excited the most anxious thoughts for her future establishment. The haughty spirit of his brother would, he knew, look down with disdain on any alliance for his son, which did not boast the splendour of both riches and ancestry; and

his own heart revolted from the idea of a union, which in him might be attributed to the wish of retaliating the injuries he had sustained from the Earl: Indeed it was this, which led him to fix so distant a period for his nephew's visit. Augusta, in his eye, would have graced a coronet, instead of being graced by it; but he knew that he had outlived the opinions of the world, where pre-eminence of birth, and a superfluity of wealth, supercede every other recommendation. He reflected that at his age, life could be of no long continuance, and to leave her without an establishment, or even one proper connexion, would expose her to difficulties, which her extreme ignorance of the world, rendered the more alarming to his imagination. His whole store of riches, was barely three thousand pounds, for affluence had deserted him, before he deserted the affluent; and he had never entertained a thought of accumulating wealth again, until Augusta, helpless and unprovided, became his charge, since

since then he had however made an annual saving, and remitted it to his banker.

After mature deliberation, he determined to conquer his repugnance to enter again into society, since that seemed to offer the only means of preserving his poor Augusta, from the calamities his fancy had suggested. He proposed to himself to spend the winter in London, and renew such of his former connexions, as would be likely to prove of service to her: and he flattered himself, that an established good acquaintance, would be a certain security against those evils he had dreaded. As he never concealed a thought in his own bosom, which he knew would give pleasure to hers, he immediately communicated his determination to her, but without hinting at the motive; and she, with all the ardour which a young mind, naturally feels in the pursuit of novelty, anticipated the happiness which he had prepared for her.

As

As Mr. Euston had maintained no other sort of intercourse with the world, than what business sometimes required, the sight of a letter was altogether a novelty: indeed such communications could only reach him one day in a week, when the servant, who superintended his farm, went to the market town, which was distant from them thirteen miles.

Mr. Euston was employed in answering some of Augusta's inquiries respecting London, when a letter was delivered to him. He read it, put his hand to his forehead, and fetched a deep groan. Augusta, who had never seen his temper ruffled upon any occasion, became greatly terrified, she threw down her work and flew to him, "My dear sir!" was all she could say.

"I am not ill my love, said he, but I have here found a stroke of fortune, to which I own my philosophy is unequal."

Augusta.

Augusta extremely agitated, could not receive the letter he held out to her.

"I am wrong, said he, to occasion you such causeless terror, and will punish myself for it, by repeating the contents of the letter. The banker, in whose hands I had placed my whole stock of money, is become a bankrupt."

"And what is the consequence of that?" asked Augusta.

"That I must lose it all, replied Mr. Euston, so my letter tells me."

"Oh, sir! cried Augusta, how you relieve me! I dreaded something fatal to your peace,—to my happiness,—nor can I be sufficiently grateful to Providence, that the evil is no worse."

"My child, said Mr. Euston, you do not
6 fore-

foresee as I do, the probable consequences of this loss; but to go no farther, and he forced a faint smile, what will my Augusta say, to a disappointment in that pleasant scheme, which but now occupied our conversation?"

"If you mean our excursion to London, replied she, I renounce it with my whole heart, for indeed, in the midst of all the gay expectancies it produced, I was still doubtful of our being so happy there, as we are now."

"Your observation, said Mr. Euston, is at once a *reproof*, and a *cordial* to me; we act wrong when we make ourselves miserable about those events, which may be intended for our good, or which we have in our power to surmount, by an exertion of our fortitude. Your strength of mind, has given renovation to mine; for solely on the
account

account of my Augusta, was the conflict sustained."

"Then cried she, pressing his hands to her lips, promise the happy Augusta, who can experience no misfortune whilst she possesses such a friend and benefactor, that you will not suffer this incident to prey upon your spirits longer than the present moment."

"I promise her, said he, that the only remaining wish of my heart, is to promote her felicity;" and kissing her, he bade her a good night.

Left to himself, he could no longer repress the poignancy of those feelings, which this fatal information had excited. He beheld Augusta, the child of his affection, the support of his age, exposed to all the horrors of unfriended poverty; nor could he frame a single project to remedy a calamity, which his age seemed to render inevitable. His bosom

bosom was tormented with a thousand distracting thoughts, and for the first time since he entered his peaceful habitation, sleep forsook his eyelids.

C H A P. V.

THE solicitude of Augusta's inquiries, the ensuing morning, convinced Mr. Euston that his appearance betrayed those emotions, which he wished to conceal; he strove to be cheerful, but it was alas! in vain, for this stroke seemed to have chilled the current of life; some days passed with continued efforts on his part, and equally concealed agonies on that of Augusta; she too plainly perceived his altered looks, the melancholy by which he was absorbed, and how ineffectual

tual her endeavours were to chase it away; she carefully endeavoured to conceal the bitterness of her anguish, whenever he was present; but the hours of her retirement were spent in tears. At length she became unable to support herself under her fears, and besought him to call in some medical advice.

“If I found myself ill, said he, I would not hesitate to do so; but indeed I have not one ailment, of which I should know how to complain to a physician. My mind it is true, does not possess its accustomed cheerfulness, but where shall I meet with a cure for that, when the tenderness of my Augusta fails to perform it.”

She could only answer him with tears, and he continued thus, “I have been viewing the past occurrences of my life, and although the retrospect taken in the aggregate is unpleasant, you ought not to be unacquainted with it, especially as the latter part is so materially
con-



connected with your own; and when we have finished our tea, I will give you the relation."

Augusta strove to attain a look of composure, and thought it right to remind Mr. Euston of the promise he had given her.

"My father, said he, the Earl of Seaton had four sons, of whom I was the youngest. It was my misfortune to lose my mother at so early a period of my life, that I have no recollection of her; she was of a noble family, but had little fortune, and her personal charms made an impression on my father, when he was too young to form interested views. A long minority had given him an uncontrollable spirit; he delighted to exhibit all the exteriors of grandeur, and unhappily for his family, indulged himself in a taste he had imbibed for high play; his estate, tho' large, consequently became deeply encumbered. As is usual in such cases, the younger sons were to look forward for provision, in the church

church or army. My brothers chose the former, my election you know."

"We were educated at home, under the care of a tutor, and my father's thoughtless extravagance, extended even to his children, for we were indulged in every expence, that either fashion or caprice led us to adopt. My eldest brother, who was nine years older than me, went abroad at the age of eighteen, and in due time I was sent to Oxford."

"My father's splendid style of living, had made me known to almost every young man of consequence, and my company was universally courted. The dissipation which now chiefly characterizes that place, which our ancestors wisely consecrated to learning, soon obliterated the few maxims of self denial, with which my mind had been furnished, and I entered into all the excesses, which money could procure. My demands were so great, that my father began to remonstrate; but

but his taste for expence, held out to me an excuse for mine, and I continued incorrigible."

"I had returned to Oxford for the last term, before I was to take orders, when a messenger followed me with the news of his having died suddenly."

"Deeply affected with sorrow at this unexpected event, I hastened to town, and found that an express had also been dispatched to my eldest brother, who was then at Paris. Preparations were made for the funeral, and he arrived before the remains of our indulgent parent were consigned to their kindred dust."

"On opening the will, we found that the estate was charged with seven thousand pounds to each of the younger sons. Lord Seaton appeared chagrined at this, but his mortification became too strong for him to preserve
a pro-

a proper degree of decorum in his behaviour, when he learnt that there were also mortgages upon it, to the amount of thirty thousand pounds."

"I scarce gave myself a thought, about the scantiness of my own fortune; I knew there was a living worth nine hundred a year in the gift of my brother, which had induced my father to wish that one of us, would enter into orders; and until it should become vacant, I thought myself secure of a residence, in the house of my brother. The idea however was soon annihilated, by his declaring that he should let both his town and country house, and retire to the continent, until he had retrieved the family estate from its heavy incumbrances. The steward told him, that might easily be done, without his quitting England, if he would consent to live with œconomy; but he answered haughtily, that he could not bear to witness the changes which must be made in his establishment."

His

“His determination first led me to reflect on my own situation, and how I were to support the appearance I had hitherto made in the world. I wished not to return to Oxford, as I found my resolution unequal to reform my mode of life, among my former companions. At length however I conquered this false shame, and resolved to return thither for the short time necessary, and after I had been ordained, to spend two or three years, in making what is called the tour of Europe.”

“I wrote to Lord Seaton, to beg he would give me his advice about the route I should take, and also some letters of introduction, at the different courts he had visited. His answer surprised me inexpressibly; it was cold and laconic; he said that letters of recommendation from him, could be of no real service, since they would introduce me to such societies, as would lead me into expences, which my fortune could not support, and he ended with a hint, that if

I were determined to travel, I had best avoid those places which he frequented, and to go as privately as possible."

"Good God ! how severe were my sensations, on reading this extraordinary epistle ; I had a difficulty in persuading myself that a brother could write it ; but alas ! I knew not his character ; we had been separated whilst I was too young to form any judgment of him."

"I should tell you that during this time, one of my brothers was at Gibraltar, and the other in the West Indies."

"I spent several years in visiting France, Germany and Italy. I heard frequently from my friends in England, and at length learnt that Lord Seaton had returned thither, having lived so frugally abroad, that he was supposed to have cleared his estate. This piece of news determined me to revisit my native country."

"On

"On my arrival in London, I debated with myself whether I should wait upon Lord Seaton, who was then at Seaton Castle or not; and that absence had weakened my resentment, feeling I hoped that time had also meliorated his affections, and therefore determined to wait upon him."

"If he did not give me a cordial reception, it was at least a civil one."

C H A P. VI.

I Had soon an opportunity of observing, that Lord Seaton inherited the chief weakness of my father, without one of his virtues to plead in extenuation of it. He affected to treat me with that sort of ceremonious respect, which is at once calculated to destroy confidence, and repel affection; and when I mentioned the time of my departure, he neither asked me to prolong my stay, nor renew my visit. On the morning I were to leave him, we breakfasted by accident alone, and

and I took occasion to mention the living, which had been intended for me by my father, in a manner which could neither offend his pride nor hurt my own. Never can his reply, or the unfeeling manner in which he spoke it, be recollected without exciting the same sort of agitation with which I then heard it: He told me, that he had sold the next presentation some time ago."

"I quitted his house, without being able to pronounce a farewell, and returned to town in a state of desperation, the greatest part of my patrimony was spent; I had no relations whom I could look up to for patronage, and my family had been so strenuous in their opposition to ministry, that I was deprived of all hopes, from any applications of that nature. The dejection of my mind, threw me into a dangerous fever, from which I was hardly recovered, when the news arrived of the death of that brother, who had been some years stationed in the West Indies. As he died

without a will, his fortune was divided among us, and proved a very seasonable relief to my necessities."

"About this time, a gentleman who had been my most intimate friend at college, prevailed upon me to spend a few months at his seat, in the west of England; he had often talked to me of his sister, whom I had never seen; and jestingly advised me to propose myself to her, adding that she inherited a very large fortune from her grandmother, and was just such a romantic being as myself. To shorten my story as much as possible, I could not remain insensible to the charms of Miss Munster; but the consciousness of my own want of fortune, and the dread that it might be suspected her's was my chief inducement, made me struggle to suppress a passion, which had taken deep root in my heart. Munster pretended he had discovered a mutual attachment, and by his encouragement, I at length ventured to make a declaration of mine. O
Augusta!

Augusta ! you are yet to learn that there are among your sex those, whose highest ambition is to condemn a lover to despair,—who delight in feigning a passion they cannot feel, and by thus raising hopes which are to be for ever blasted, render the misery of their victims more acute. This was my fate,—and to add to the keenness of my sufferings, the man who had taken pains to supplant me, was my brother, Lord Seaton; and the friend who had fostered my infant passion, basely deserted my cause, and became an advocate for him.

“ Shame and disappointment, again drove me to the continent; if I could have persuaded myself to have adopted the tenets of the church of Rome, I had surely then embraced a monastic life, and the seclusion practised by the monks, first gave me an idea of the plan I afterwards pursued. I began to think it possible, that there might be

found for me in my own country, a solitude suited to the colour of my fate. I traversed the most unfrequented parts of Wales, and fortunately discovered just such a spot as my fancy had led me to wish. I applied to the possessor, who readily agreed to lease it to me for my life, and as the terms were adapted to the slender remains of my inheritance, I was soon settled in my simple abode. I prevailed upon Mrs. Davey, to come and take the direction of my little household. She had been a nursery maid at Seaton Castle when I was a child; and in endeavouring to save me from being hurt by a ladder, which I had pulled down from one of the fruit trees, fell under it herself, and dislocated her hip, by which means she became a cripple. From the time I was of an age, to be sensible of her kind interference, I had allowed her an annual stipend for her support; and the grateful creature rewarded me, by accepting this solitary life with cheerfulness.

“The

“The serenity of my days, formed for a time their happiness. I almost ceased to think of a world, where I had been alike disappointed in love, friendship, fame, and fortune, and soon became devoted to the pleasures, which the culture of my fields, and the improvement of my cottage, afforded me. The rude ignorance of the peasants, demanded my pity, and required my assistance; I made them my humble friends; and if the reciprocity of intellectual intercourse was denied me, I at least escaped the mortifications which ingratitude inflicts, and the still keener pangs which those must endure, who no longer bask in the sunshine of prosperity.

“Revolving years, brought neither change of sentiment, nor change of Life; and I had passed more than twenty years on this spot, when Providence in compassion to the sufferings of my youth, gave to my declining age, a comfort sufficient

to recompense me, for all I had endured. This precious gift, was you my Augusta.

“I found you early one morning at my door, beauteous, and smiling as a Cherub. How you were brought there was a mystery, I could never develope; but your apparel bespoke an affluent parentage, and I regarded you as a deposit, which I should in time be called upon to surrender.

“The fascinating graces of your infancy soon made an interest in my heart; and when added to these, I discovered that you possessed the most amiable disposition, I doated upon you, with the unbounded affection of a fond father.

“The expectation of hearing from your family, withheld me from giving you that account of yourself, which I perhaps ought sooner to have done; but indeed, I *wished* to consider you entirely my own; and
whilst

whilst I practised the delightful employment of forming your mind, I flattered myself, that I was also providing for your future establishment. From your infancy I have annually saved a little sum, which from the simple style in which you have lived, might have proved a sufficiency for your support, when I am no more. The failure of my banker has destroyed this hope, and I must leave my Augusta to that poverty I so much dread.—Here the conflict of his mind, impeded his farther utterance.”

“Oh my compassionate benefactor! my father!” exclaimed Augusta, throwing herself at his feet, “into what agonies has your affecting story thrown me! but my gratitude—my veneration—can they be increased, even by the knowledge that your benevolence has cherished and adopted, a miserable outcast? poverty is my inheritance, and I dread it only from the effect it has

upon you. Revive my dearest Sir,' recollect that you conquered your own misfortunes, painful as they were, and do not let your poor Augusta feel a reproach she is unable to bear, that of having renewed them."

"Alas! my child replied he" the imbecility of age, admits not of the struggles of youth; mine are passed, and all the consolation I can now feel, arises from the reflection, that I have imprinted on your mind strong sentiments of religion, and the love of virtue."

"But come," my Augusta continued he in a less serious tone, "I am exhausted by my long conversation, and we will now go to supper.—

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

DURING their repast, at which Augusta strove to be cheerful, although her heart felt as if it were breaking, she asked Mr. Euston what became of that brother, whom he had not mentioned in the conclusion of his history."

"True" said he, "I forgot to tell you that he died at Bunkers Hill, on the breaking out of the American war: this also recalls another circumstance to my recollection
which

which I learnt from Lord Euston; that he is not the son of Miss Munster, but of the second lady, whom my brother married. I knew that she had brought him a daughter, before I quitted the world, but had not heard that she soon after fell into a state of melancholy dejection, which in a few years, put a period to her life."

When they separated for the night, Augusta gave full vent, to the sorrow which oppressed her heart, nor could she prevail upon herself to go to rest, until she had stolen to the chamber door of Mr. Euston, and convinced herself by listening, of his having fallen into a quiet slumber.

She quitted her room early, after a night passed in melancholy reflections. Mr. Euston was not risen; she again listened, at his door, and from the silence which reigned in his apartment, flattered herself that he was still enjoying a refreshing sleep.

She

She suffered two hours to elapse, stepping every ten minutes on tip toe to the foot of the stairs. Her surprise, now became mingled with terror, and ascending the stairs, she gently opened the door, and in an accent of extreme tenderness said, How do you do my dearest Sir?

No answer was returned her.

She repeated her inquiries somewhat louder, but no returning sound vibrated on her eager ear. She darted down stairs, and rushing into the kitchen, where the servants were assembled at breakfast, clasped her hands together in an agony of speechless terror, and fell senseless on the floor.

The servants who loved her, were in the utmost consternation, and knew not what to do. They poured water on her face, and at length brought her to herself. She opened her eyes, looked wildly about her, and

and exclaimed, "my father!" David, and one of the servant women ran instantly to his apartment, from whence she returned in a few moments, wringing her hands, and repeating with tears, that he was dead.

"Fly for a Doctor, said Mary; ride David for your life. My poor young Mistress—What will become of her? What indeed will become of us all?"

Augusta, who had heard the lamentations of the servants, had again fainted; and David was in an instant on horseback, and out of sight.

When Augusta revived, her whole frame was convulsed, and she sat some moments gasping for breath; a torrent of tears happily succeeded, and at length restored her to the use of reason.

"Mary"

"Mary," said she, "how do you know that he is dead? come with me and let us try if any means can be found to stay the spirit of the best of men?"

She directed her steps to his apartment, magnanimity striving with woe, for the predominance in her countenance, and her whole figure giving the idea of an administering angel.

She took his cold hand in her's. "Can death, she said, "look so lovely? she felt his pulse—"but, he is gone for ever"! convinced of this, she knelt at his bedside, and pressing his hand to her lips bathed it with her tears, which now flowed freely.

"Oh my father! my more than father" said she; "now indeed is the moment arrived which you so much dreaded for your poor Augusta! your fostering care was all she possessed in this world, and deprived
of

of that, she has lost every thing that could endear it to her. The compassionate benefactor!—the amiable friend!—the gentle monitor! is now no more. Can I bear to survive him! O God!" continued she "lifting up her streaming eyes with fervency towards heaven, "do thou mercifully unite me to that blessed saint, whom I deplore, or enable me to support the trials I have to endure, with a degree of fortitude worthy of the lessons I have received from him, and becoming a creature, whom thou hast endued with reason"!

Mary now besought her to leave the room. "No," replied she, "the time will too soon arrive, when I must cease to behold him: I will continue with him as long as I can."

David instead of riding to the market town, which was at a considerable distance, had galloped to a neighbouring village a few

few miles off, at the hazard of his limbs, where an old man resided, who from an attention to the common maladies of his fellow creatures, had been enabled to dispense a few domestic medicines to his poor neighbours, with tolerable success, by which means, his reputation amongst them, had risen to a great height. As he really possessed a large portion of humanity, David readily prevailed upon him to mount the horse, by whose side he ran with uncommon swiftness.

Mr. Griffiths, who had been told that Mr. Euston was dead, and that Miss Denbeigh lay dying, was rejoiced to find *her* in a state which indicated no immediate danger. She besought him with great eagerness to open a vein in Mr. Euston's arm, but he assured her it was to no purpose. However, to satisfy her, rather than from any hope he entertained, he performed the operation, which as he predicted, had no effect. He then

then in his turn entreated that she would quit the room, and swallow a cordial which he had brought in his pocket.

Observing the heavy affliction she endured, he proposed to her to return with him, until Mr. Euston's funeral was over, telling her, that his wife and daughter should do their best to entertain her.

This kind attention was soothing to the dejected spirits of Augusta, and had beside, the good effect of rousing her into a recollection of what was to be done. She thanked him with much gratitude, but added, that the cares of seeing the last sad duties paid to Mr. Euston, should devolve on no one but herself. He then left her, saying he would call the following day.

CHAP. VIII.

AUGUSTA, with a calmness of resolution which surprised even herself, gave the necessary orders to the servants; and David was dispatched to the neighbouring town, both to execute them, and to give information of the death of Mr. Euston to their landlord, whose son a Clergyman, the living was to devolve to, and whom she invited to perform the funeral solemnities.

On his return David produced a letter directed to Mr. Euston, which Augusta opened

opened with trembling hands, so suspicious were she now of fresh misfortunes. It was from Lord Euston, and had lain some time at the post office. He had written merely to thank his uncle for the hospitable reception he had given him, and to inquire after his health, and that of Augusta.

This letter convinced Augusta of what she had suspected before, that it was proper to give intimation of Mr. Euston's death to his family. But to whom could she write? if to Lord Euston, would it not imply a claim upon his protection, or if not so, expose her to a visit from him, and a renewal of his addresses? and to write to the Earl of Seaton, that unfeeling brother, who in defiance of the ties of consanguinity, had treated her revered friend with so much neglect, was almost as repugnant to her feelings. She debated long how she should act; and at length, guided by her own ideas of propriety, she addressed the following letter to the Earl.

My

My Lord,

"I experience inexpressible anguish, in recalling to your Lordship's recollection, the memory of your brother, the honourable Edward Euston: he never would have permitted it in his life, and it is his death which alone compels me to the task. He will be buried to-morrow, (for such were always his desire,) on that spot, where, in the exercise of those virtues which best enoble the human mind, he had alone found happiness.

He has made a will, and bequeathed all he died possessed of to me, which I believe, is little more than the furniture of his cottage: if however, your Lordship should think, that this ought not to devolve upon a stranger, I am ready to renounce it, and to put any one in possession, whom you shall think proper to empower.

I remain,

Your Lordship's

humble Servant

Augusta Denbeigh.

On the following day, the remains of the excellent Mr. Euston, were consigned, amidst the tears and lamentations of his dependants to their last earthly mansion.

The situation of Augusta, during this awful scene, is not to be described. The fortitude which supported her, whilst any thing remained to be done, which could shew her veneration to her benefactor, now entirely forsook her. She threw herself upon his coffin; she besought him in a sort of wild agony, not to desert his child, but to look down from heaven, and bless and support her; and was with difficulty torn from it.

The good old Mr. Griffiths, would not leave her that night. He began to fear the effects of her sorrow; and although he was not endowed with power to offer consolation, his pity soothed Augusta, who had considered herself as standing alone in the
5
midst

midst of the vast creation, without one being in it, who would interest themselves about her.

In a few days, she received the following letter from Lord Seaton.

Madam,

The effects of my brother, whether disposed of to you by will, or otherwise, are much at your service; as they must be too trivial to engage the attention of

Your humble Servant,

SEATON.

The pride and indifference visible in this letter, shocked her extremely; however she soon turned from it to deliberate on the steps she had now to take; for she had attempted to form no plan, until she had received the Earl's answer.

She sent for the Clergyman, who had by this time taken possession of the living, and offered to him the furniture of the house; and if he were determined to carry it on, the implements belonging to the farm; but she told him that David and Mary were going to be married, and she rather wished to give these to them, as a reward for their long and faithful services to Mr. Euston, if he would consent to take them to be his tenants. To this he readily assented, and thus Augusta, "tho' so poor herself, already made two of her fellow creatures happy.

The terms being agreed upon, between Augusta and Mr. Williams, he, his wife and children, soon removed to the parsonage, where she was invited to remain, as long as it was agreeable to her.

She found Mrs. Williams an uneducated woman; but she had a strong natural understanding, and much sincerity of heart.

David

David in a short time had disposed of every thing which remained, and Augusta found herself mistress of about three hundred pounds.

“I wish, said she one day to Mrs. Williams, to go to London, that I may put myself in some way of getting a livelihood; but I have no acquaintance there. Do you know any one, to whom you could give me a recommendation?”

“Yes, indeed, that I do, (replied she,) “for I have a sister that lives there, and she is a Milliner, and knows all the great folks; and if I were to write to her, and ask her, t’would do you a great deal of service.”

“Will you then do me that favour,” asked Augusta?

“If I will not, answered Mrs. Williams, it is because I cannot write; but Mr. Willi-

ams shall, which is quite the same thing. But you must tell him yourself what you would have said.

“I thank you greatly, said Augusta, and will consider of it by the time Mr. Williams comes in.”

That very evening, a letter was written to Mrs. Mills, by Mr. Williams, to acquaint her, that a friend, whom they much respected, would be in town in a short time; and intreating she would do her every service in her power, and receive her as a lodger in her own house.

CHAP,

C H A P. IX.

THE mode in which Augusta was to travel to London, was next to be decided upon. There were chaises to be had at the market town; but no coaches went from thence. Augusta inquired what was the difference between them, and was told that she would travel alone if she went in a chaise, but that coaches accommodated either four or six persons, and were therefore considered the most pleasant, because of the society they afforded.

"If that be all," said Augusta, "I shall determine upon having a chaise. The present turn of my mind is best suited to solitude; besides, how can the company of those persons who are strangers to each other, be at all agreeable?"

Mr. Williams remarked that travelling in coaches was cheaper.

"That," replied Augusta, "ought to be a consideration with me. Pray are they materially so?"

"No," said Mr. Williams, "I believe not, I have never travelled in a chaise, but I know that coach hire comes very high."

"Then," rejoined Augusta, "I will abide by my former resolution."

With an aching heart, she now set about the packing up of her cloaths. Her Piano Forte, Mr. Euston's violin and books, she
left

left in the care of Mr. Williams. She deposited her money and bills, and Mr. Euston's gold watch, in a cabinet which contained his papers, and this she carefully placed in her trunk.

The evening preceding the day, on which she was to abandon the only habitation she had ever known, she visited every spot, which recollection told her, had been endeared to her by the presence of her benefactor. The scenes of her happy infancy, crowded upon her imagination, and when she contrasted them with those she was now going to enter upon, she felt a sickness at her heart, and her tottering limbs scarcely supported her. She at length found herself in the midst of the peasants houses: Mary and David presented themselves before her with swollen eyes—the rest of the villagers gathered round her, and nothing was to be heard but their lamentations.

Augusta's tears streamed afresh. "My kind friends," said she, farewell. Cherish the remembrance of the best of men, and the precepts he taught you"—she could say no more. They followed her, but she waved her hand for them to go back, and struck into the path that led to the church yard.

The rising moon, with her faint beams, gave a soft light to the closing day, and shone upon the windows of the church, into which she was about to enter. The solemn stillness, and partial gloom of the place, struck horror thro' her soul. She directed her steps towards the tomb she had raised over the body of Mr. Euston, when on turning an aisle, which had hid it from her sight, she beheld it illuminated. The power of motion forsook her—her respiration grew short, and her eyes were rivetted upon it. It was some moments before she recovered herself sufficiently to perceive, that this
striking

striking appearance was produced by the moon's having just risen high enough in the horizon, for its light to be reflected by the projecting marble. She now threw herself at the foot of the tomb, hung over it in speechless agony, and wet it with her tears. She had indulged herself in this luxury of wretchedness, until the moon had receded from the window, and the place was enveloped in darkness. Then throwing her arms around the cold marble, "Oh my father!" cried she, "thy cares, thy affection, could not procure for the wretched Augusta, an exemption from the miseries which now await her; but there is a Being, who *can* protect the innocent, and thou wilt not fail to supplicate him to be her supporter!" She arose; and by this confidence in heaven, reached the parsonage in tolerable composure.

Early the next morning the whole family were in motion, as Augusta's departure was

fixed for six o'clock. The unevenness of the descent from the hill, would not admit of the chaise driving to the parsonage; her port-manteau and trunk, were therefore carried to it, and attended by Mr. and Mrs. Williams, David and Mary followed with her baggage.

Those only who have been compelled to quit a spot, endeared to them by the recollection of every domestic enjoyment, can alone judge what were Augusta's feelings. She frequently turned to catch another view of it, and hardly kept pace with the reluctant steps of her friends; but when at length the projection of the mountain had hid it from her sight, she walked hastily forward, and looking what she could not speak, threw herself into the chaise.

The ruggedness of the road, could not awake her from the reverie in which she was plunged, and she arrived at the end of the first stage, without knowing that she
had

had traversed a single mile. As horses had been ordered for her by David, she had nothing more to do, than pay the demand for the two stages. Scarcely were her thoughts more collected, when she arrived at the next town; but here she was obliged to exchange the chaise. She begged that the horses might be put too immediately, and proceeded without thinking of dinner. She continued her journey until late in the evening, and after taking a dish of tea, retired to rest.

The conflict of her mind, on the preceding day, had exhausted her so much, that she gained some sleep, and arose greatly refreshed by it. Her chaise was ready, and she instantly departed.

The beauty, and novelty of the prospect around her could not fail to attract her notice. As far as the eye could reach, all was in a rich state of cultivation. Here

E 6. were

were no barren mountains, or brown heaths ; and the fields were embellished with clumps of trees, just now beginning to put forth the foliage of an early spring. " Ah repeated Augusta to herself," with a deep sigh, " if Mr. Euston had been the companion of my journey, how delightful would my sensations have been, on viewing such enchanting scenery."

She had arrived at the end of the second of that day's stages, and was as usual requesting that another chaise might be got ready without delay, when the master of the inn informed her that he had not one pair of horses disengaged.

" And pray, sir," said Augusta, " how long must I wait before they will be at liberty ?"

" Until to-morrow morning, replied the man ; for if they return early, they won't be

be fit to travel again, before they have had a night's rest."

This threw Augusta, into some perplexity, but observing that there was a coach waiting at the door, "pray said she is that carriage going towards London?"

"Yes, madam, replied the man.

"Then I will go in that" said she.

"Would you please to have me signify as much to the lady" asked the man.

"By all means," replied Augusta.

The inn keeper turned into a parlour and addressing a lady who sat at breakfast, told her there was a gentlewoman just arrived, who was in great haste to get to London, and as he had no horses to send her forward, she would be glad to go in her coach.

"Did

"Did not the lady send her name?"

"No, madam."

"Then pray desire her to walk in."

Lady Merton, with good reason, supposing that the request came from some lady of her acquaintance, who knew her equipage, prepared herself to grant it, with all imaginable politeness: but her features underwent a thorough change, when she perceived an entire stranger enter the room.

She arose, and courtesying with great formality, remained silent.

Augusta, whose penetration was extremely quick, instantly perceived that she had been guilty of some indecorum. A deep blush spread itself over her cheeks, and gave to their faded bloom, the lustre of her former beauty.

"Pardon

"Pardon, madam," cried she, "the ignorance of a young traveller, who perceives that she has committed some impropriety, and knows not how to offer an apology for such intrusion."

"Call not that an intrusion," replied lady Merton, much struck with the gracefulness of her figure, and the insinuating softness of her manner, "which is capable of giving so much pleasure. If I understand right, you are much distressed for a conveyance to London; and a seat in my coach, is much at your service."

"Your goodness, madam," replied Augusta blushing still deeper, "is a severe reproach upon my own want of reflection, but I beg to assure you, that when I sent so strange a message, I apprehended it was to be delivered to some person travelling in a stage coach; and as that is a vehicle I have never
seen

seen, the sight of yours at the door, did not prevent me from falling into such an error.

Lady Merton now smiled with great good humour, and entreated Augusta, to partake of her breakfast.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

LADY Merton, her woman, and Augusta, were seated in the coach, and the conversation began on the part of her ladyship, with an inquiry, how far Augusta had travelled alone.

“I am unacquainted, madam,” said she, “with the exact distance, and if I measure it by my own ideas, it will be great indeed! It was however but yesterday morning that I quitted

I quitted the spot where every hour of my life has been spent; where I have enjoyed a degree of happiness, not often I believe the lot of mortals, and which I despair of ever seeing again.—Here her tears flowed in abundance.

“I am very sorry, my dear,” said lady Merton, “that I have by my question, revived such painful ideas.”

“You have not revived them madam,” replied Augusta, “they are ever present to me : my heart is devoted to sorrow.”

“If I shall not indeed then give you additional pain,” said lady Merton, “I will venture to ask you the cause. Your dress tells me that you have lost some near relation.—Perhaps you mourn a father?”

“No madam,” replied Augusta, “not a father, but a friend, guardian, and benefactor,
tor,

tor, who supplied to me those relations which I never knew."

Here Augusta, perceiving that she had greatly excited the curiosity of Lady Merton, related briefly to her, that she had been placed in her infancy, under the care of a clergyman, who resided in a most retired situation in North Wales. She dwelt on the exalted benevolence of his character, and painted with energy the beauties of their abode, and the felicity of their days; "but his death," continued she, "has thrown a cloud over my future life, thro' which no cheering ray appears to bid me hope for brighter prospects."

There is a prevailing force in truth, which the heart cannot resist. The eyes of Lady Merton had testified to Augusta, how much she sympathized in her distress. She gave her every comfort in her power, and for the remainder of their journey, with a delicacy

cacy of attention, strove to divert her, by describing the places near which they passed.

When they changed horses for the last time, before they reached London, Lady Merton, taking Augusta's hand, said, "my sweet companion has not yet told me, where she is going; and she cannot do so much injustice to my feelings, as to suppose that I am now, uninterested for her!"

"Your Ladyship's kindness is so great," answered Augusta, "that I fear I must have appeared ungrateful by leaving you to make the inquiry. I have letters of recommendation to a Mrs. Mills, a Milliner in Bond Street, in whose house I propose to lodge, until I can form some plan for the future."

"If such only are your intentions," said Lady Merton, "may I venture to entreat that you will indulge me with your company
for

for some little time. I find myself attached to you by a sentiment of regard, which will not suffer me to part with you; and am ambitious of being your friend."

This proposal, as unexpected as it was eligible, was accepted with many acknowledgements by Augusta, who soon found herself about entering the metropolis.

The streets, crouded with passengers, and splendid equipages, afforded her new cause of wonder, in the midst of which, they were set down at a handsome house in Argyle Street.

Lady Merton conducted her guest to an apartment, which she ordered to be prepared for her, and with true politeness, bade her consider herself at home.

The next morning when she appeared at breakfast, Augusta's looks were considerably

ably improved, and Lady Merton thought her the most perfect beauty she had ever seen.

“If you please,” said Lady Merton, “we will stay at home to day, both to recover the fatigue of our journey, and to settle ourselves comfortably in our new dwelling; and, added she, if you have any commissions for shop people, Innes is going on some errands for me, and will execute yours.

Augusta took the opportunity which seemed kindly designed for the purpose of leading to the subject of dress; and entreated that Lady Merton would favour her with her advice. “I am sensible, added she with a smile, that I must, want modernizing, but I wish that my apparel may be in as simple a style, as is consistent with a visiter of your Ladyship’s.”

That answered Lady Merton will best agree

agree with your mourning, and we will go into my dressing room, and contrive all about it.

On entering her apartment again, Augusta perceived that some shelves in a light closet, were filled with books, many of which were not however new to her, for from the time she was capable of being improved by books, Mr. Euston had every new publication sent to him from London, that was stampd with the good opinion of the public. She thanked Lady Merton when they met at dinner, for this repeated proof of her attention, which she said had gratified her highly, as she was particularly fond of reading.

When they returned to the drawing room, Lady Merton recollected that she had not given orders to be denied, and Augusta could not conceal her surprise, when on the entrance of a footman, Lady Merton said she was not at home, if any body called.

“ You

"You, Miss Denbeigh," said she, "will hardly think any fashion allowable, which thus gives a sanction to a falsehood; but when you have learnt, that there are numbers of people in this great town, who for want of happiness at their own houses, are constantly running about to annoy their acquaintance, you will cease to condemn a custom, which, with the appearance of civility, frees you from the persecutions of such impertinent intruders.

Augusta acquiesced in this, and remarked, that the laws of society must be new, and would therefore appear strange, to such a novice as herself.

"True," said Lady Merton, "but good breeding is innate. It is the result of good sense, and good humour; and I question whether society has gained much, by the artificial manners it has imposed; for we know that sincerity has so little to do with those,

those, that in doubting of part, we are apt to include the whole."

Augusta seemed to view a Harpsichord which stood in the room, with some degree of attention, which led Lady Merton to ask her if she understood music.

"I have been accustomed to play a little," answered she, "what my kind benefactor taught me."

"I am fond of music," said Lady Merton, "will you try that instrument?"

"Augusta sat down to it, and ran over the keys in so elegant a manner, as surprised Lady Merton."

"Whose compositions have you been used to play my dear," said she, "giving her some books."

Augusta mentioned several, but added that she would try to get thro' any her Ladyship wished to hear, as she hoped to find no difficulty in playing new lessons.

She performed so admirably, that Lady Merton's astonishment increased. "Pray tell me my dear Miss Denbeigh," said she, "what other things you have acquired a knowledge of, besides music."

"I have learnt drawing," answered Augusta hesitatingly, "french and italian.—Mr. Euston was my preceptor in each."

"I do not wonder that solitude was pleasant to you," said Lady Merton, since you were possessed of so many charming resources; and I am almost tempted to regret, that our youth of both sexes, are not brought up in a similar way; since their time is divided by so many frivolous pursuits, that one hardly ever sees them excel in any thing."

By

By this time several tickets were brought to Lady Merton. "See," cried she, "the representatives which we now send to make our visits."

"Surely," answered Augusta, "this must at least be a ridiculous custom, for what advantage can be gained by an intercourse so carried on?"

"It serves to give people of fashion a general knowledge of each other," replied Lady Merton, "enables them to fill their rooms at a rout; and conduces to an exchange of compliment, when they meet at public places: And are not those to be considered as valuable privileges my dear? Augusta smiled; and they soon after separated for the night.

C H A P. XI.

IF Lady Merton was charmed with Augusta, she was not less so with her new friend. Her Ladyship was in fact a most amiable woman, and highly respected by all her acquaintance.

When they met at breakfast, Lady Merton said, "we will take an airing this morning, and drive thro' some of the principal streets, that you may have a better idea of the opulence of this vast town. I have besides

sides another motive which leads me out: I wish to pay the respect of an early visit to Miss Merton. To this Lady," continued she, "my son is to be united, on his return from his travels. A singular circumstance happened in the family of Lord Merton. The chief part of the estates became divided from the title, and is now centered in this young Lady, who is a relation. My departed Lord, and her father felt mutually the wish that a marriage should take place between them, that the splendour of the family might be revived; and they have been designed for each other, from their infancy. My son is a most amiable young man, and I hope the disposition of Miss Merton is equally so; but she was spoiled by the indulgence of her father, and since his death, her ideas of her own importance are rather increased, than diminished. I love my son," said she sighing, "so much, that I must own this gives me pain; but I flatter myself, that when he becomes her husband,

the example of his manners, will reform her's. His father," continued she, the tears starting in her eyes, "has been dead five years, and he comes of age in a few months, when I expect him home."

Augusta bowed her thanks for this little piece of family history, and to divert the melancholy into which it had thrown Lady Merton, she opened her port folio, and spread some drawings before her, saying at the same time, "these my dear madam are different views which I took, of the village I lived in, tho' I fear they will give you no better idea of it, than my simple description.

"They are very highly finished," said Lady Merton, "and your colouring is exactly nature. How sublime must such scenery be? I have scarcely seen any thing so romantic.

The narrow valley, along which Mr.
Euston,

Euston, Augusta, Lord Euston, and Mr. Devereux had walked, the last evening the two latter spent with them, particularly excited Lady Merton's admiration, and she asked Augusta to copy it for her. This view Augusta had taken the day following their departure, and had embellished it with four figures, intended as a representation of their little groupe.

Whilst they were thus employed, Mrs. Sydenham was announced, who entered exclaiming, "my dear Lady Merton, how excessively happy I am to see you! I flew to you the moment I heard of your arrival! How are you? When did you come to town? Then turning to Augusta, she made a low courtesy.

"I came here the day before yesterday," replied Lady Merton; but give me leave to introduce my friend Miss Denbeigh to you.

F 4

"Lord,

"Lord," continued Mrs. Sydenham, after having paid her compliments to Augusta, "how could your Ladyship think of remaining so long in the country? We have longed to have you amongst us; indeed I have talked of no one else for this last fortnight.

"You are very obliging," said Lady Merton. "Pray how is Mr. Sydenham?"

"Very well I thank you my dear Lady Merton," answered Mrs. Sydenham, "but I protest I have not seen him to day. Pray do you go to the Opera to night? I have room for you and Miss Denbeigh in my box.

"I shall not go to night," answered Lady Merton, "but some other time, I shall be glad to accept your kind offer."

"Oh! you know you may command me at all times," replied she; "but by the way,
you

you must absolutely promise to attend my concert on Tuesday.—I will take no denial."

"Then," answered Lady Merton, "I will at least have the merit of a ready compliance."

“Thank you,” said Mrs. Sydenham, “but your coach, I know, is in waiting, I will not detain you. Good morning to you ladies.—And she ran out of the room.

"Pray, Miss Denbeigh," said Lady Merton, "how do you like your first town acquaintance, Mrs. Sydenham?"

"If I had no other cause to like her madam," replied Augusta, "her attachment to you, would be a sufficient one."

“ Her attachment to me my dear ! do you really believe she has an extraordinary degree of regard for me ? ”

"What else am I to understand from the
F 5 flatterings

flattering expressions she made use of," said Augusta.

"Not their literal meaning, I assure you," replied Lady Merton. "Mrs. Sydenham is a woman of fashion, and a woman of the world, and the same interest she takes about me, she professes to feel for all her acquaintance, who are so numerous, that she would soon fall a martyr to her sensibility if it were really unaffected."

They now proceeded on their morning ramble, and Augusta inquired if they should go near Bond-Street.

"We can go there," replied Lady Merton, "if you wish it."

"The letter I have for Mrs. Mills, is my motive for wishing it," said Augusta.

Lady Merton pulled the string, and directed

rected the coachman to the milliner's. When they arrived at her house, Augusta alighted, and desired to speak alone with Mrs. Mills. She presented the letter to her and informed her of the comfortable situation in which she had left her sister. Mrs. Mills after she had read it, assured Augusta, that she should be happy to serve and oblige her, to the best of her power."

"At present," said Augusta, "I am a visiter to Lady Merton, but when I leave her, I shall depend madam upon your obliging promises."

They found Lady Merton in the shop, who had employed herself in purchasing, and giving orders.

They drove next into Grosvenor-Square, where Miss Merton resided, and on Lady Merton's giving her name, were conducted into Miss Merton's dressing room, who was at breakfast. She arose to receive them, and

when Lady Merton presented Augusta to her, she just viewed her, with a vacant stare, and sunk down again upon the sofa.

"Have your Ladyship breakfasted?" said she, "Yes," replied Lady Merton, "these two hours, for it must be now near two o'clock."

"It is impossible," cried Miss Merton, "to get to bed before five o'clock. Indeed early hours are my aversion."

"But will not such very late ones injure your constitution?" asked Lady Merton.

"Not at all," answered Miss Merton, for the later I sit up, the greater flow of spirits I possess; and nothing does me so much harm I think, as the sight of the sun."

Lady Merton gave a look of inquietude to Augusta, and then asked Miss Merton
what

what had been her engagement the preceding evening.

"I protest," said she, "I can hardly remember where I was; but I finished at the Dutchess of Westmoreland's ball. Don't you pity me," continued she, turning hastily to Augusta, but still surveying her as before; Lady Betty Castleton has a masquerade to night, and Mrs. Fortescue gives a most splendid ball."

"I am sorry madam," answered Augusta, "that you are too much fatigued to attend either of them."

"My God!" exclaimed Miss Merton, "how you mistake me! the difficulty of attending both, is what distresses me. Here if I go first to the masquerade, how am I to get dressed properly, and in time for the ball; and if I go to the ball first, I shall
be

be engaged for so many dances, that I shall lose the masquerade.

“Yours is a most terrible dilemma, my dear,” said Lady Merton, perceiving that Augusta was at a loss what reply to make; “but as we may infer from your solicitude, that both places are likely to be pleasant, why cannot you give up one, that you may have a full enjoyment of the other?”

“Lord, ma’am!” said she, “how can you think of such a thing? besides being seen but by half the number of people, I should not be able to shew both my dresses.— Then pausing for a few moments, she added, all that I can do is, to go directly to Lady Dunbar, who is to chaperon me to the masquerade, and prevail upon her to stay for me till two o’clock; for I positively cannot go to the ball before twelve. And then rising, she rang the bell, and without any ceremonious attention to her guests, ordered her chair

chair to be in readiness. Lady Merton, and Augusta, took their leave; and the former could not conceal the chagrin such folly gave her.

In the evening Augusta complained of a head-ach; and as Lady Merton expected visitors, she obtained permission to retire to her chamber early.

CHAP.

C H A P. XII.

AUGUSTA arose the next morning so much indisposed, that she could not accompany Lady Merton to hear divine service, who was very uneasy at her illness.

“I have ever enjoyed good health,” said Augusta, “but I have been used to the open air, and to walk a good deal. Perhaps the want of my accustomed exercise, may occasion this little indisposition.”

“Undoubt-

"Undoubtedly it does," said Lady Merton, "and I ought to have thought of it. You shall walk out my dear every morning.

"If your Ladyship pleases then," replied Augusta, "it shall be before breakfast, for that is what I am used to; and my early rising, will enable me to be back again, before your breakfast hour."

"By all means," said Lady Merton, "and I will instantly order John to be ready to attend upon you early every morning."

She accordingly took a walk the following morning, between nine and ten o'clock, and was back again, before Lady Merton was down stairs; who was so much pleased to find her better, that she insisted upon her perseverance.

Tuesday, the day of Mrs. Sydenham's concert, was now arrived, Lady Merton,
and

and Augusta, prepared to attend it. Augusta, for the first time in her life, set to a hair dresser, and her light, shining hair, was ornamented with a bandeau of black love ribbon only. They were set down at Mrs. Sydenham's door, about eleven o'clock, and found the rooms full of company. Mrs. Sydenham seemed the happiest of human beings, in having her friends thus about her; and after the ladies had paid their compliments to her, and Augusta had been introduced to Mr. Sydenham, they took their seats in the concert room.

The band was very full; and the effect produced by so many instruments, gave Augusta much pleasure; but as she perceived that every body else heard them with indifference, she aimed, in appearance, to do the same. In those intervals when the music ceased, the company became clamorous on the subjects of the day: Augusta however had no temptation to join in the
con-

conversation, for the Lady who sat by her, looked at her with such repulsive coldness, that she had not courage to address her. At length Mr. Sydenham made his way to her, and leaning on the back of her chair, said loud enough to be heard by the surrounding company, we are indebted to Lady Merton, for having graced our room with such beauty, as claims the admiration of every beholder!

This extravagant compliment, threw Augusta into great confusion, which was increased when on raising her eyes, she perceived that a supercilious smile, was directed to her, by her fair neighbour.

"Have you been well entertained Miss Denbeigh?" said Mr. Sydenham.

"Greatly sir," replied she.

"I need not ask you," said he, "if you
are

are fond of music; the expression of your countenance tells me that you are.

"Your judgement in physiognomy, is not discredited by the conjecture," replied she, "but I cannot conceive what the rule is, on which you found your observation.

"Then I will tell you," returned he; "your features indicate sensibility, which is congenial to the sounds of harmony."

"Perhaps," said she smiling, "you are less fortunate in your conjecture now than you were before."

"Then," replied he, lowering his voice, and affecting to suppress a deep sigh, "you will inflict misery not to be endured."

Augusta began to think her former fullen neighbour, greatly preferable to the new one she had gained, when the renewal of the concert

concert, relieved her, by obliging Mr. Sydenham to be silent : But what was her surprise, when on looking up, she beheld Lord Euston at some little distance. The sight of him renewed so many painful ideas, that she sat absorbed in deep melancholy, and neither heard the music, nor Mr. Sydenham, who frequently exclaimed, "charming!" in order to draw her attention.

The concert was now finished, and Lord Euston approached, in order to pay his compliments to Mr. Sydenham; and Augusta's unsocial neighbour, throwing a deal of animation and good humour into her face, cried out, "O Lord Euston! you should have been here these two hours ago.—The music has been divinely performed I assure you."

He was going to make some reply, when his eye caught Augusta. "Good God!" exclaimed he, "is it possible that I have
really

really the happiness of beholding Miss Denbeigh?"

She bowed but was unable to speak. The dejection of her countenance, and her being in deep mourning, gave a sort of indication of his uncle's death, which he had not heard of. He longed to ask her a thousand questions, but felt himself restrained, by the fear of giving her pain, and therefore confined himself to the inquiry of how long she had been in town.

About a week, was the answer. Mr. Sydenham was all attention to this scene; and the lady who had before addressed Lord Euston, again cried out, "I have been dying to see your Lordship ever since the masquerade. You don't know I suppose, that it was me, who told your fortune?"

"No indeed," replied he, "nor did you foretell the happy event which has befallen me

me to night, or I should have fallen down and worshipped you."

Here they were joined by Lady Merton, who inquired of Augusta, how she had been entertained, and perceiving by her replies that she was discomposed, attributed it to a return of her head-ach, and therefore told her, she was ready to attend her home. Mr. Sydenham offered his hand to Augusta, to the great mortification of Lord Euston; and the ladies departed without his being able to say any thing more to Augusta. He did not however neglect to ask Mr. Sydenham, where Miss Denbeigh resided, who told him, and with truth, that he had never seen her before that evening.

On their return home, Lady Merton again expressed her solicitude for Augusta's health.

"Indeed, my dear madam," said she, "I

am

am not ill; but I was thrown into extreme agitation by the sight of Lord Euston, who is nephew to my beloved, and lamented benefactor."

"And are you acquainted with him?" asked Lady Merton.

"He paid a visit once in Wales," replied Augusta, "and but a few months before the death of Mr. Euston, which was the circumstance which chiefly affected my mind. I perceived," added she, "that he is ignorant of the loss I have sustained, and I had not courage to tell him.

"Well, but my dear," said Lady Merton, willing to divert her from such melancholy reflections, "tell me if you were really pleased with the evening you have passed."

"With the music madam, I have been excessively delighted; but not so, with the
other

other part of my entertainment. I was seated by a lady who regarded me with so frigid a countenance, that I durst make no effort, at a conversation with her: And when Mr. Sydenham stationed himself by me, I was doomed to hear such extravagant encomiums, as quite disconcerted me. I protest to you my dear Lady Merton, he almost made love to me."

"If he has not done so already," said Lady Merton laughing, "I dare say he will; Mr. Sydenham is a man of gallantry, so take care of yourself."

"I can hardly believe that your Ladyship is serious," answered Augusta; for surely a married man, with such a character, would find it difficult to gain admission into the first societies."

"You are mistaken my dear," said Lady Merton: The chief recommendation for

VOL. I. G that,

that, is *wealth*. People do not now give themselves the trouble of inquiring after the *morals* of their acquaintance."

Ah! thought Augusta, how justly did Mr. Euston estimate the evils of poverty! "Your tacit neighbour," continued Lady Merton, "has her excuse, in the custom of the day, and I ought to take all the blame on myself, for not having introduced you. An introduction, is not intended simply to say who you are, but extends a permission to well-bred people, to converse together. Miss Felton is a lively good humoured girl, as you will find when you are acquainted."

After a little more chat, they retired to their own apartments.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

SLEEP did not soon visit the eyes of Augusta. Her thoughts were employed in a busy retrospection of past scenes, and a comparison of them, with the present Society, such as she had seen, afforded no equivalent to the simple joys of rural life. She had met with no character which could interest her, except Lady Merton; and which way soever she turned her thoughts,

they were still imbittered with undiminished regret, for the loss of Mr. Euston.

She arose early, and attended by Lady Merton's footman, took a walk in St. James's Park. As she was returning home, she was alarmed by the cry of, "a mad dog!" and perceiving one of those animals running along the same side of the Street on which she was, she almost flew to the other, and turned down the first Street that presented itself. Here, seeing a door open, she darted in, and was soon in a parlour, where sat Lord Euston, at breakfast. Her fright at first, made her insensible to every thing but her safety; but when she was assured of that, she felt a considerable degree of mortification, at having thus, tho' so undesignedly, thrown herself into the protection of Lord Euston.—She instantly made an effort to depart.

"My dear Miss Denbeigh," said his Lordship,

Lordship, "you are not yet sufficiently recovered.—Pray be seated; I will conduct you wherever you shall direct, when you are more composed."

She told him, that a servant of Lady Merton's was in waiting, supposing that he had actually followed her; but the man, who had been as much alarmed as Augusta, instead of attending to her, had consulted the means of his own preservation, and ran back to the shop of a green-grocer, whom he knew. As soon as he perceived that the danger was past, he began to feel ashamed of his desertion of Augusta, and supposing she had gone strait forward to Argyle-Street, ran as fast as he could to overtake her.

When Augusta was informed that the servant was not there, she beg'd to have a chair called directly, which Lord Euston did not dare to refuse, tho' he evidently betrayed an inclination to detain her.

The chair was soon procured, and Lord Euston was putting her in it, and giving directions to the chair-men, to go to Lady Merton's in Argyle-Street, when Mr. Devereux presented himself at the door. He made way for the chair, unperceived by Augusta who had drawn the curtains, and stood motionless with surprise. Lord Euston however, soon brought him to himself, by calling out in high spirits, "why Devereux, are you turned to a statue?"

"Not so," answered he, with an embarrassed air, "I came here with an intention of sitting an hour with you, but I had just recollected an engagement, which had before escaped my memory, and was at that moment debating, whether I must not give up the pleasure of seeing you."

His emotion did not escape Lord Euston's observation, who readily conjectured the cause, and whose vanity was so highly gratified

tified by it, that he could not restrain the pleasure it gave him. Mr. Devereux, on the reverse, seemed never in a worse frame of mind, for enjoying the exuberance of Lord Euston's good spirits, and repeating his excuse, left him hastily.

Mr. Devereux had returned but lately from the continent, on some family business, and was to set out again for Vienna the following morning. He had brought letters for Lady Merton, from her son, who was at that court; but having been much engaged, had not been able to call upon her, to tell her the day of his departure, until that morning. Anxious to repair his neglect, by giving her all the time he then had in his power, he went to her house early, in expectation of finding her at breakfast. The servant informed him she was not yet come down stairs, therefore he stepped into the parlour, to leave a note. He had written it, and was about to leave the room,

when his eyes caught the sight of two drawings which lay upon the table, and which seemed done in a masterly manner; one was in an unfinished state; he took up the other, and to his great amazement, beheld the narrow valley with over-hanging rocks, and the rapid stream, by the side of which he had walked with Mr. Euston and Augusta; his heart too, told him that the drawing was her's, and he involuntarily pressed it to his lips; but the means by which it came there, excited his utmost curiosity. Could Mr. Euston and Augusta be in town? His heart throbbed at the idea. On looking at the drawing again, he observed the happy party, whom Augusta had introduced: He knew each, and could not help remarking, that he was placed by the side of Augusta, instead of Lord Euston, who had actually detached her from himself, and Mr. Euston. This trifling circumstance gave such a sweet sensation, as left him no longer a stranger to the impression she had made on his heart.

Scarcely

Scarcely could he resist the temptation he felt, to carry off the prize: The sight of her port folio, reanimated the design, and he examined it, in hopes of finding another copy. In turning over the papers, he found a miniature portrait of Augusta. Almost trembling through joy, he seized this, placed it carefully in his pocket book, and quitted the house. When he was in the Street, he began to reproach himself, for not having made some inquiries of the servant who had let him out; but on recollecting that Lord Euston could give him fuller information, he directed his steps to his house, and arrived there just in time to witness, what he conceived to be, a secret visit from Augusta: and it was this, which occasioned the mortification, that Lord Euston had so plainly perceived.

When Augusta arrived at Lady Merton's, she perceived the footman, was waiting at the door, with much shame and confusion

in his countenance. On her quitting the chair, he besought her not to mention the circumstance to his Lady, telling her, he should be discharged, and probably be deprived of the means of getting his livelihood if it should be known. The benevolence of her heart readily led her to pardon his behaviour, and to set his mind at ease by giving him a promise that Lady Merton should remain unacquainted with it. This promise obliged her to conceal the whole of the adventure she had met with.

As Lady Merton and Augusta were about to separate, in order to dress for dinner, a splendid equipage drove to the door, and Miss Merton soon entered the room. She courtesied with much ceremony, to both ladies, and without speaking, took a seat.

"The happiness I feel at seeing you my dear," said Lady Merton, "receives a considerable

siderable allay, from the appearance of languor which your countenance wears.—Are you well?”

“Lord, madam,” exclaimed Miss Merton, how you mortify me! “if I do appear at all fatigued, it must be from the extreme hurry I have been in, to get here before your Ladyship’s dinner hour.”

“Lady Merton hurt at this reply, remained silent; and Augusta, to fill up the chasm in the conversation, told Miss Merton she hoped she had not been disappointed in her intention of attending both Lady Betty Castleton’s masquerade, and Mrs. Fortescue’s ball.”

“No,” said she; surveying Augusta, as she answered her, “I did contrive it, for I have no idea of giving up any thing my heart is set upon.”

"Then," said Lady Merton, "you will not refuse me a request, in which I assure you mine is much interested. I am," continued she, "making up a packet for my son, which is to go to-morrow morning; and what I have to beg is, that you will give me a few lines to inclose within it."

"La! madam," cried Miss Merton, "if you tell him I am well, it will be the same as if I wrote."

"You would feel much resentment, and with cause too," replied Lady Merton, "if you believed so."

"But I hate writing," said Miss Merton; and Lord Merton should be satisfied with hearing from me in any way that is most agreeable; but however ma'am, to oblige you, I will scribble a note to him."

Whilst she was employed in writing, Au-
gusta

Augusta in her turn, now that she could do it, without the appearance of impertinent observation, surveyed Miss Merton's figure. She was tall and thin, and therefore her deportment, which she intended should be highly dignified, was extremely formal. The chief expression of her countenance, was that of conscious superiority; hence she had lost all sweetness of manner, and whenever she meant to confer a civility, did it with an affected humility, which destroyed the compliment, by the obligation it seemed to impose. Augusta had just determined, that with more ease, and affability, Miss Merton might have been both elegant and engaging; when she arose from the table, and presented an envelope to Lady Merton, saying, "this nasty writing had almost made me forget that I wished to engage your Ladyship to dine with me next Saturday, and I hope Miss Denbeigh will accompany you. I shall dine early, added she, because I know you
are

are not used to late hours; so pray don't be later than seven."

Soon after this engagement was arranged, Miss Merton took her leave; having as she protested, a million of places to call at.

Lady Merton had engaged a box at Drury Lane Theatre, for that evening; and being anxious that Augusta should see the whole of a performance, there presentation of which was so totally new to her, they repaired thither immediately after dinner.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

LADY MERTON and Augusta, had not long left Argyle-Street, before Lord Euston arrived; on being told that Miss Denbeigh was from home, he commissioned his servant, to learn whether she was to be found at any of the public places of resort; and hearing with great pleasure that both the ladies were gone to Drury-Lane Theatre, he instantly drove thither.

When

When Lord Euston entered Lady Merton's box, the first act was just concluded; and he instantly beheld in Augusta's countenance, all the delight she had experienced from this new species of entertainment. He inquired with much apparent anxiety, if she had recovered her fright, and told her of his having been in Argyle-Street, where he had learnt that she was at Drury Lane. Augusta did not forget what Lady Merton had said to her the preceding evening, and immediately introduced Lord Euston to her Ladyship, who then took his seat, by Augusta. The play was Shakespear's, "As You Like It," in which he seems to have studied to do justice to the delicacy, and disinterestedness, of female character. It was in fact, Augusta's favourite comedy, although when she had read it, she had not estimated as now, the sweet, and interesting friendship of Roselind and Celia; unexperienced as she then was, she had fancifully imagined, that such scenes were *often* to be met with in the world;

world; and finding her own heart capable of the same generous exertions, she could not hesitate to believe that they were the general inmates of the female bosom. A very short intercourse with this world, had convinced her of the fallacy of her conclusion; but the description was too delicious, for her to part with it entirely: and when she saw such affecting images, thus realized before her, it seemed to authorize her former opinion, and to restore her to those scenes of rural simplicity, which her imagination delighted to recall.

She was indulging herself in this happy retrospection, at the end of the play, when in one of the opposite boxes, she beheld Mr. Devereux! he had been some little time in the house, and one of the first objects his eyes had caught, was Augusta. She had from that moment engaged his whole attention, and he observed the pleasure which animated her countenance, whenever

ever she conversed with Lord Euston. He was gazing at her in an attitude of deep thought, when she first saw him, and evidently perceiving that she knew him, he quitted his own party, and joined her's.

All the gaiety of Augusta's heart had forsaken her, and when Mr. Devereux entered the box, and accosted her, her features bore marks of strong dejection. What he said was spoke so low, and so inarticulate that Augusta attempted no reply; he therefore turned to Lady Merton, and told her that he had intended calling at her house, when he quitted the Theatre, to receive the packet, with which he was to be intrusted, for Lord Merton.

"And you still, I hope," replied Lady Merton, "will have the goodness to pursue your design. We shall stay the entertainment, which Miss Denbeigh wishes to see,
and

and then I shall try to prevail upon you to accompany us home."

"If I thought your Ladyship would not accuse me of caprice," said Augusta, "I should venture to retract those wishes, which I know are your sole inducement for staying."

"By no means," answered Lady Merton; "I have no choice: therefore whatever is most pleasant to you, will be so to me."

"I think then, madam," said Augusta; "that my attention is fatigued for the present; so if you please, we will return home."

Lady Merton, Augusta, and Mr. Devereux accordingly quitted the Theatre, to the great chagrin of Lord Euston, who could not conceal his disappointment: It was however some what alleviated, when in going across the lobby, Augusta told him, that if
he

he had leisure the next morning, she would be glad to see him for ten minutes.

When they arrived in Argyle-Street, Lady Merton retired to make up her packet, and left Augusta and Mr. Devereux together. A silence of some moments ensued, during which Mr. Devereux appeared absent and spiritless Augusta; said in a low, and tremulous voice, "has Mr. Devereux been informed of the death of his excellent friend Mr. Euston, that he thus seems to sympathize with me, on such an irreparable loss?"

"Is Mr. Euston indeed dead!" exclaimed Mr. Devereux.

Augusta answered him only with tears. "Good God! Miss Denbeigh," said he, approaching her with inexpressible emotion, "how you surprise me! believe me, my heart shares in the distress of your's.

Augusta

Augusta still remained silent. He took her hand, which he pressed between his, and then added, if it be not too presumptive—if the man before you, could render you any service—But no, that honour belongs only to Lord Euston and his family.”

“To the family of Lord Euston,” replied Augusta, “I am an entire stranger, withdrawing her hand from his; and with his Lordship I have no further acquaintance than Mr. Devereux has witnessed: Therefore,” added she, with a look of dignity, “from him I neither expect, nor can receive any obligation.”

Mr. Devereux in his turn, was now silent, and Augusta, fearing that she had given him cause for displeasure, said with great sweetness, “the interest which Mr. Devereux is so good as to shew for me, demands my gratitude; and I shall perhaps make the best return to his kindness, by informing
him,

him, that Lady Merton extends both her protection and friendship to me."

"Amiable and lovely Miss Denbeigh!" replied Mr. Devereux, "how I adore the condescension which can thus relieve my apprehensions, and pardon my presumption. Oh! that I could but prove to you the solicitude I feel for your happiness! the conflict of the present moment, is more than I am able to bear. I shall see you no more, for many months, perhaps years—and I leave you in a situation, where beautiful, and unsuspecting of deceit as you are, you will constantly be surrounded with dangers—" "Alas!" replied Augusta, interrupting him, "short as my acquaintance with the great world has been, I have already seen enough to detect its hypocrisy; but I will bear in remembrance the hint you have given me, and learn to be suspicious of my own judgment, and cautious how I adopt that of others."

“Oh Miss Denbeigh!” said Mr. Devereux, “the exalted sentiments of your own pure bosom, I both know and reverence”—again continued he, “exert the benevolence of your heart, and forgive the fears of danger with which I have inspired you; your felicity is dearer to me than my own, and inconsistent as I am, I know not what to dread”—He walked about the room in great disorder, and Augusta, although she did not comprehend his meaning, was too much affected to attempt a renewal of the conversation, before Lady Merton returned; who strove to detain him to supper, but he pleaded the many things he had to arrange previous to his early departure the next morning, and in a melancholy voice, bade them adieu.

C H A P. XV.

LORD Euston reached Argyle-Street, by twelve o'clock, and was shewn into the breakfast parlour, where Augusta waited to receive him. The solemnity of her manner, threw some damp, upon the high spirits, with which he first accosted her; and as soon as they were seated she said, "we have met each other three times my Lord, without having once mentioned the name of your excellent uncle; an omission

sion I could not have been guilty of, had not the places been so improper for the information I had to give you: I therefore entreated the favour of this visit, that I might ask, if you are yet a stranger to his death?"

"Totally so," replied Lord Euston. "Your presence in London, indeed, and your dress, gave me suspicions which I durst not inquire into."

Lord Euston spoke truly. His father had given him no intimation of the death of Mr. Euston, and when he first saw Augusta at Mrs. Sydenham's concert, he suspected the event, which had really happened: but when he met her afterwards, his joy at seeing and conversing with her, was so unbounded, that he thought of nothing else.

"I wrote to Lord Seaton," said Augusta, attempting, tho' ineffectually to restrain her

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tears,

tears, "I thought it right to apprise him of the death of his brother. He sent me this answer, which seems to imply a doubt of the existence of a will, which I beg leave to shew your Lordship.—Here it is."

"Good God!" my dear Miss Denbeigh, exclaimed Lord Euston, "do you suppose that I will receive further proof than your word? or that if his property was not devised, I would suffer you to be deprived of one atom of it?"

Augusta bowed, and said, "Of all the family of my beloved benefactor, you sir are the only one, who seem united to him by the ties of affection, suffer me therefore, to restore this gold watch to you. It is useless to me; and I shall feel gratified by knowing that it is worn, and valued, by his nephew."

This watch was remarkably curious and
beautiful;

beautiful; Mr. Euston having purchased it, during his travels in Germany.

"It is a treasure," replied Lord Euston, "which I shall prize beyond any thing I possess in this world; but which I, nevertheless, can receive on one condition only.

"What is that," said Augusta?

"The replacing it with another," answered he.

"That I cannot permit," replied Augusta, "I have no occasion for such an ornament; and you besides hurt me, by proposing an exchange for a gift, which I present to you, in the name of your uncle."

"The gift you present," said Lord Euston, "is of so much value, that an acknowledgement is all I dare attempt; and if you deprive me of making one, you will of ac-

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cepting

cepting the other." So saying he took the watch, kissed it, and put it in his pocket.

Augusta rising, said she must now attend Lady Merton. Lord Euston entreated her permission to call upon her again, and took his leave. He almost flew to his own house, so full was he of a project which he had thought of the moment he took Mr. Euston's watch from Augusta. He summoned one of his servants and ordered him to get post horses instantly, and be ready to convey a letter he should have to send by him. This letter was for Mr. Devereux; which he flattered himself would overtake him before he left Dover, and contained a request, that his friend would purchase for him, one of the most elegant ladies watches he could meet with at Paris, and send it by the first conveyance. As the messenger was ordered to travel night and day, he overtook Mr. Devereux before he set sail, who read the letter, and with a deep sigh, bade the servant

vant assure his master, that he would pay the utmost attention to his commands.

The next evening Lady Merton was to receive company, and Augusta underwent the ceremony of introduction to a number of persons whose names she had never heard before. Indeed the only faces she knew, were those of Mr. and Mrs. Sydenham, and Miss Felton.

When the card parties were arranged Augusta was left unemployed; which Miss Felton no sooner perceived, than she left the loo table, and protested she would bear her company, Augusta remonstrated in vain, for Miss Felton's complacency, was not to be overcome: At length she said with a smile, "you know not madam the pleasure you may perhaps deprive me of, by detaching me from making observations on the game; for I assure you, that until this evening, I have scarcely seen a card, and never
H 3 play'd

play'd one. Really," replied Miss Felton, "why I thought cards were played all over the world! however I can tell you, there is no sort of pleasure in looking on, for all the enjoyment of the game, is to have a vast deal of money at stake."

"You surprise me," said Augusta, "more than I have done you. Is it possible that large sums are depending upon the cast of those pieces of paper?"

"Large sums," replied Miss Felton! "why no, one could not ruin one's self here; but there are places in town where people may get rid of the incumbrance of a large fortune in one night."

Augusta was going to ask an explanation, when Mrs. Sydenham came up to her, crying, "Lord, my dear Miss Denbeigh, are not you engaged at cards, I am quite miserable to see you unemployed."

"I re-

"I remain so madam," replied Augusta, "because I am totally ignorant of the game, nor do I even know if I may venture to inquire, if you have been fortunate."

"Oh! certainly," answered she. "But I have lost every thing. That is the five points, and ten guineas which I bet on the rubbers, into the bargain."

Mrs. Sydenham now left them, to join her party, and a gentleman approached, whom Augusta had not seen before. "Here is my brother," exclaimed Miss Felton, presenting Sir William Felton to her, "I began to think you late."

"I feel now that I am so," replied Sir William, bowing to Augusta, "and regret the moments that I have lost."

"Miss Denbeigh does not play cards,"

said Miss Felton, "and we have been tête à tête, this half hour."

"You have been very good," answered Augusta, "and I fear have sacrificed your own amusement, to contribute to mine."

"Oh no!" said Miss Felton, "cards are my aversion, I assure you."

"Why then," asked Augusta, "do you play them?"

"Because," answered Sir William, "Arabella is enough of the fine lady, to prefer being in the fashion, to any self gratification whatever."

"Indeed," retorted Miss Felton, "you do not do my complacency the justice it merits; for I only wish to avoid being alone in a multitude."

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The conversation was now interrupted by Mr. Sydenham, who intreated Sir William to take his seat at the card table, which he presently did: Miss Felton too, quitted Augusta to speak to a lady of her acquaintance, and then Mr. Sydenham said, "I hope I shall be well received for having relieved you from so sad a boor, as this insipid brother and sister, who are little better than Automaton, since not only their motions, but even their ideas, are regulated by the caprice of fashion."

Augusta very much surprised at the freedom with which he spoke of those, who appeared to be numbered among his friends, looked at him some moments before she replied, and then only said, "I do not know enough of Sir William, and Miss Felton, to decide upon their characters, but I must own they do not seem to merit the severe remarks you have made upon them."

"Oh! you have that indeed yet to find out;" said he, "tho' it is possible you never may, since *you* are sure of being followed by admiring crowds wherever you go, which is a certain security, as it is indeed the only one of their attention."

"Are you not trying to impose upon my credulity," said Augusta? "surely it is improbable that rational Beings, should think, and act, as well as dress, from the influence of fashion. Besides, stranger as I am to them, their behaviour to me can only be the result of good-breeding, or a compliment to Lady Merton, whose visiter I am."

"In the last circumstance," said Mr. Sydenham laughing, "you have certainly found the cause, you have derived a consequence in their eyes from your introduction by Lady Merton, which neither your beauty, or exalted merit, could ever have
given

given you; and you will find that their attention to you, will be guided by that of others. But," continued he, observing that Augusta seemed at a loss how to reply, "how great will be your triumph over them, in the adoration your charms will excite! And here if I am not mistaken, comes a candidate for your favour, whom I already dread as a rival."

Lord Euston, who had just entered the room, now approached, and paid his compliments to Augusta, they were immediately joined by Miss Felton, and soon afterwards by Sir William.

The conversation now became general, to Lord Euston's great mortification, who could not detach Augusta from the party during the remainder of the evening. Miss Felton took leave of Augusta with a profusion of civilities; and Sir William with so many high flown compliments, as gave Lord Euston an uneasy pang in his bosom.

C H A P. XVI.

THE next morning Miss Felton called upon Augusta by her own appointment, to go to Kensington-Gardens. Sir William she said had rode into Hyde-Park, and would join them there ; and Lady Merton having other engagements, Miss Felton and Augusta proceeded without her. The morning was lovely, and Augusta was quite enchanted with the walks, which, as is common at this season, were full of company. Miss Felton, informed her who
every

every lady was, and indeed they seemed almost all to be of her acquaintance; as they frequently stopped to speak to different parties, Augusta was greatly embarrassed to hear audible whispers of inquiry about herself, and equally so at the unrestrained manner, in which the gentlemen of Sir William's acquaintance, seemed to observe her. Tired of such scrutiny, more than the length of the walk, she ventured to hint a wish of returning home, which was immediately assented to by her companions. As they were leaving the Gardens, Miss Merton was about to enter with a party of her friends. Mutual civilities were exchanged between Sir William, his sister, and them; and Augusta unwilling to be deficient in respect to Miss Merton, who did not seem to observe her, approached and paid her compliments. Miss Merton looked at her, as if trying to recollect who she was, and then suddenly dropping a courtesy thanked her, and passed on.

“Pray,”

"Pray," said Miss Felton, when they were seated in the coach, "are you not acquainted with Miss Merton?"

"I have seen her but twice," replied Augusta, "and then only for a few moments."

That evening Lady Merton again took Augusta to the Theatre, which place she assured her, she preferred to every other.

The following day, was the one appointed for their visit to Miss Merton, at whose house they arrived before she was ready to receive them. The dinner was served in a superior style to any thing Augusta had yet seen; and indeed, there seemed through the whole, a studied display of unnecessary splendour, as the dining party consisted only of the three ladies. When they returned to the drawing room, Miss Merton sat down to a very fine Piano Forte, and
gave

gave them some lessons, and a song. During the performance of these, several visitors arrived, who however entreated the indulgence of hearing her play. When she at last arose, Lady Merton, who from the natural goodness of her heart, felt anxious that Augusta's excellence might be known, told Miss Merton, that she hoped she would try to prevail upon Miss Denbeigh to take her seat; who immediately yielded to the solicitation. As she played, the words, "charming!" "Bravissimo!" were repeated by a gentleman who seemed a connoisseur in music; which however was so far from encouraging her, that it distressed; and rather made her play worse. During her performance, Miss Merton had taken a seat, by one of her visitors, and had affected great attention during the first movement, but then she suddenly entered into loud chat, with her friend, on some very lively subject as it seemed, for they both laughed immoderately. This interrup-
tion

tion did not prevent Colonel Beauclerc, from asking Augusta if she did not also sing. Lady Merton replied for her, and hurt at the rudeness of Miss Merton, was determined to punish her further for it. She sung a favourite Opera air, which she had learnt since she came to town; and part of her audience at least, seemed pleased with her voice. Whilst she was receiving their acknowledgements, Miss Merton arose, and saying coldly that she was much obliged to her, shut the Piano Forte.

More company now arriving, card tables were placed; and Miss Merton was busily employed in arranging her parties, when Sir William Felton, and Miss Felton were announced. Whilst they were paying their compliments to her, Colonel Beauclerc came up and said, "for God's sake my dear Miss Merton, tell me who this syren is, whose powers of seduction are so various, and so strong?"

"If

"If you mean Lady Merton's protégée," replied she, "I really have no further knowledge about her, than that her Ladyship picked her up on one of the welch mountains."

"Well," said Miss Felton, "I always fancied there was something extremely rustic about her, yet who could have believed that Lady Merton would introduce a person whom nobody knew. I am really excessively vexed, for I took her with me, as you saw to Kensington-Gardens, and all my acquaintance are curious to know who I had with me."

Sir William only shrugged up his shoulders, and Colonel Beauclerc had hastily quitted them and returned to his seat by Augusta. Miss Merton approached and just asked her to play cards, which she declined, assigning as an excuse, her total ignorance of any game. She then importuned Colonel

nel Beauclerc, to make one of a party at loo, which he also excused himself from; being determined not to lose the society of Augusta, whom he soon perceived from his knowledge of the company, would be the only one who sat by. This gentleman had been particularly struck with the beauty of Augusta, and her skill in music, had made a double interest in his heart. He had found means to *engage* her in conversation, by introducing that subject, and was not less delighted with the ease and elegance of her manners. He readily saw that she was unknown to most of the company, and therefore had applied to Miss Merton, to learn who she was. The reply he received, had operated differently from what had been intended by it; and convinced him of the superior excellence of Augusta. Born of a noble family, he was less tenacious of rank, than those whose pretensions were more equivocal; and his liberal mind gave to extraordinary merit, the pre-eminence over
adven-

adventitious endowments. He now entered again into conversation with her, and she was pleased to find him the sensible well-bred man of fashion.

During all this time, neither Miss Felton, or Sir William had taken the least notice of Augusta; who much surprised at it, at length said, "I must go and speak to Miss Felton." Her reception was so cold, that she would have felt pained from the apprehension of having committed some indecorum, had not the character Mr. Sydenham had given her that moment occurred to her recollection; and she saw that from the distant civility of Miss Merton, she had sustained a proportionate loss, in that of Miss Felton. Unwilling to obtrude, she returned to her seat, and remained in conversation with Colonel Beauclerc, until Lady Merton rose to depart.

So unpleasant had the evening been to
Augusta,

Augusta, that she returned home spiritless and fatigued. Lady Merton perceived it, and expressed her fears that late hours, and hot rooms, by no means agreed with her. She assented to this; rather chusing to suffer Lady Merton to remain in her error, than give the most distant cause of suspicion, that she had been hurt by the apparent unkindness of Miss Merton.

In looking over the tickets which had been left, Lady Merton found a letter for Augusta, who soon afterwards retiring to her apartment, on opening it saw the signature of Lord Euston.—The contents were as follow.

“It is in vain that I pursue you, with the hope of finding a moment to declare to you the unalterable sentiments of my heart. You are either from home, or surrounded by people whose presence imposes silence. Suffer me therefore, most adorable of your sex,

sex, in this manner, to supplicate a revocation of those cruel words, which forbade me to hope that you would ever listen to my vows. You are released from those obligations, which your too grateful heart, then dwelt upon; and I am under none, which ought, or can interfere, in the exquisite happiness of calling you mine for ever? You are dearer to me, than the very air I breathe, and equally necessary to my existence. In pity therefore, tell me that you but wish me to live, and I shall remain, your most grateful, devoted, and adoring—

EUSTON."

Augusta was much shocked at the persevering assiduities of this thoughtless young man. She long sat ruminating upon his letter, and as sleep was effectually driven from her eyelids, she took up her pen, and answered it as follows.

My

MY LORD,

"I am equally surprised and grieved, at the purport of your letter; for I flattered myself, that absence, and reflection, had enabled you to conquer, an ill judged partiality. Be assured that the motives which induced me to decline listening to you before, have still, and *ever will have*, the same weight with me. I respect Lord Euston as the nephew of my benefactor—I wish to preserve a place in his esteem, and to give to him an equal share of mine.—But more than that, can never be granted by his obliged humble servant,

AUGUSTA DENBEIGH."

She now sought for rest on her pillow, but in vain; and when she attended Lady Merton at breakfast, her countenance too plainly told the sleepless night she had passed.

CHAP.

C H A P. XVII.

LADY MERTON and Augusta passed the whole morning, without the interruption of visitors; and her Ladyship just as they were about to part to dress for dinner, said, "I have promised Mrs. Sydenham to spend the evening at her house, with a select party of friends; but if you my dear Miss Denbeigh do not feel well enough to accompany me, I will send my excuses.

"By

"By no means, my dearest madam," replied Augusta, "there is no reason for that; I must be much worse than I really am, before I could suffer you to give up your engagement; and I shall be very happy to attend you." She affected to look in spirits as she spoke this, and taking up her work, quitted the room. As she ascended the stairs, she heard a loud rap at the door, and hastened forward, congratulating herself that she had made her escape, before the entrance of visitors.

Previous to their departure for Mrs. Sydenham's, Lady Merton told Augusta, that she had had a visiter that morning, which she placed to her account,

"From whom? pray madam," said Augusta blushing; for she concluded it was Lord Euston.

"From Colonel Beauclerc," replied she.

"Is

"Is he not my dear Lady Merton, one of your acquaintance?"

"He is my dear Miss Denbeigh; but still you were the avowed motive of his visit."

"How so madam? He knows nothing of me.

"He has, I believe," said Lady Merton, "seen too much of you for his repose. In short my dear, to keep you no longer in suspense, he acknowledged as much to me, and came here to learn from me, to whom his proposals might first be communicated, with propriety. I told him of your having been educated under the care of Mr. Euston, brother to the Earl of Seaton; but that the death of your guardian had left you mistress of yourself; and he is eager to express his admiration of you in person."

"I am sorry, very sorry," replied Augusta, "that he honours me with such distinguishing regard; for I never can return it."

"Colonel Beauclerc my dear," said Lady Merton, "is a most amiable man. He is besides of the first family in England, being nephew to the Duke of Somerset; you will therefore consider all the advantages of such an establishment, before you decline it."

"I am too grateful for the honour his preference does me," replied Augusta, "to accept of it, without being able to bestow upon him in return, an equal degree of affection; which is alas! out of my power."

"You will give me leave to infer then," said Lady Merton smiling, "that your heart is bestowed elsewhere."

"Do not conclude so my dear madam," replied Augusta; "I really am not designed
for

for high life; educated in the utmost obscurity, I can receive no enjoyment from an intercourse with the great world; and the utmost of my ambition is to be favoured with your friendship, and to pass my days in retirement."

"I will not wound you," answered Lady Merton, "by calling these sentiments romantic; but my friendship for you is so great, that I cannot suffer you to reject so advantageous a proposal, without taking more time to consider of it. Colonel Beauclerc is not a boy, and an attachment such as his, is most likely to promote your felicity. His application to me, convinces me, both of the solidity of his understanding, and the strength of his affection."

"I will suppose," answered Augusta, "that Colonel Beauclerc's partiality is as great as your Ladyship describes it, since nothing else could induce him to think of

an obscure young woman, who is without fortune, or a single connexion in life, which can countenance his preference except yours. And shall I then, merely to aggrandize myself, for I can be biassed by no other sentiment, act so dishonourably as to owe an exalted station to his generosity, when the only return I can make him, an affection as pure as his own, is totally beyond my power? Ah madam! what a life of misery, must a life of such dissimulation be!"

"Still," cried Lady Merton, "this aversion to Colonel Beauclerc, inclines me to suspect some preference elsewhere! If that has no existence, but in my fancy, your gratitude would soon be converted into love.

"When an acceptance in the first instance would convict me of such selfish conduct, I should be too much degraded in my own opinion," replied Augusta, "to be answerable in future, for that rectitude, from which
I had

I had so glaringly swerved. What I know of my own heart, I will sincerely avow to your Ladyship. It is, I firmly believe, free from that sort of attachment, to which you allude; but I own, that when I think of Colonel Beauclerc, I cannot avoid making a comparison, by which he is greatly the sufferer. This preference, is however produced by no expectations. The object of it has never given me reason, even to suspect that he regarded me with partiality, and is as much above my wishes, as he is my hopes."

"You are very ingenuous!" exclaimed Lady Merton, "how much I admire the delicacy of your sentiments, and the rectitude of your principles. Indeed my dear Augusta," continued she, "I know not any family to whom you would not do honour."

"Oh madam!" said Augusta, her eyes filled with tears, "this approbation from
I 3 you,

you, is indeed most dear and soothing to me! and since I am so fortunate as to receive it, allow me to hope that you will have the goodness to put a stop to the further addresses of Colonel Beauclerc.

“That my love,” answered Lady Merton, “would be improper and uncivil, I have referred him to yourself, and the refusal must now come from you. I am sorry I gave him the hopes I did, because his disappointment will be the greater: But indeed I could not restrain myself from doing justice to the character of my fair friend, and I told him I sincerely wished that he might call such a treasure his. He knows that we are to be from home this evening, and has therefore deferred his visit to you, until to-morrow morning. But come,” continued she, “it is time to go to Mrs. Sydenham’s; the coach I hear has been at the door some time. They arrived so late at Mrs. Sydenham’s, that two parties were engaged

engaged at cards, and Lady Merton was sat down at the third table. Augusta's courtesy to Miss Felton, was returned by a distant bow, which Mr. Sydenham, who was at play in the same set, did not fail to observe.

“Augusta having her work box with her, presently sat down, and began to amuse herself with it. She had not however long pursued her employment, before Lord Euston entered the room, and took his seat by her. In the confusion of her thought, she scarcely lifted her eyes, up to him; but finding that he sat totally silent, she at length thought it right to say something, and asked him in a low voice, if he did not join the card parties.”

“No,” was all his reply, but he spoke in so melancholy a tone of voice, that she involuntarily looked at him, and perceiving

a great alteration in his countenance, inquired if he was unwell."

"The body," replied he, "must sympathize with the mind, where that is completely miserable. Your compassion," continued he, "is withheld from me, and the despair I feel will soon remove the object of your aversion."

"Talk not thus," said Augusta, extremely affected; "indeed Lord Euston you do me injustice; the unfortunate partiality you honour me with, makes my unhappiness, as much as it does your own."

"Impossible," cried he! "Oh that you did but feel the hundredth part of the agonies which I do!"—

"It it can indeed gratify you to know that I do, receive that satisfaction," replied Augusta. "You behold me poor, unknown,

known, and but for Lady Merton, unfriended. These are calamities that must give some degree of pain to my bosom; and when to them, is added the reproach of having inflicted misery on the nephew of my preserver, I almost sink under the pressure of my misfortunes. Oh my Lord! that you would conquer this foolish passion! then might I, under the disinterested name of friend, look up to you for advice and comfort, you, who have witnessed how dear I was to the most valuable of men!"

"Gracious heaven!" said Lord Euston, "can I bear to hear this, from the lips of Miss Denbeigh? Oh adored object of my regard! if you will not suffer me to avert from you the evils you have mentioned, never again shall my complaint be added to your sufferings. Let me but enjoy the friendship you offer, and teach me how I can best deserve it."

"There," said Augusta, "spoke the kindred spirit of the best of men! how would he have gloried in the magnanimity of his relation. This generous resolution my Lord, relieves me from so much distress, and gives me such convincing proof of the goodness of your heart, that my esteem and gratitude are inviolably your's."

"Without your esteem," replied Lord Euston, "life would not be worth preserving."

"Talk not so," said Augusta. "The consciousness of having performed our duty, is the sweetest solace we can receive, when we struggle with disappointment. Your family—your rank in life, demand that you should act nobly; and the keenest remorse would I know, in time be your portion, if reflection told you, you had acquitted yourself unworthily."

"Whilst

"Whilst I hear you," answered he, "I am almost charmed to a forgetfulness of what I suffer. But my passion will have its paroxysm, and I will leave you whilst I have resolution to tear myself away."

"Augusta gave him her hand, and looked the approbation she dared not express.—He sighed, and departed."

She sat some little time deeply absorbed in thought; and might have remained so much longer, had not Mr. Sydenham roused her from her reverie. "I have been miserable, said he, "to be with you; and have execrated both the cards, and party I have played with, for depriving me of a happiness I prize so highly. But tell me my dear Miss Denbeigh, why you are so grave?"

"I know not that I am so," answered Augusta. "Pardon me," replied he, "but I have watched you for some time past, and

I thought the attention of Lord Euston, seemed to give you displeasure."

"I am surprised," said Augusta, much hurt to find that he had observed her, "that you could take any interest in the conversation which passed between Lord Euston and me."

"And why surprised? Do not all that know Miss Denbeigh take an interest in all that relates to her? or added he sighing, am I so singularly unfortunate that I cannot detach my thought from her, for even a moment."

As Augusta knew not what to reply to this strange address, she remained silent; and Mr. Sydenham, putting a very different construction, upon her embarrassment, continued to express, in very vehement terms, his admiration of her. At last she said, "Is this proper language for the husband of Mrs.

Syden-

Sydenham to use to the friend of Lady Merton?"

"That I am the husband of Mrs. Sydenham, I have never ceased to regret," replied he, "since I became acquainted with you; but that title, thank heaven, does not debar me from the power of rescuing you from a dependance on Lady Merton's frowns—He was proceeding, when Augusta, who in his want of respect evidently saw that he had received some information respecting her situation, and conjectured that it had been conveyed by Miss Felton, arose from her seat, and fixing her eyes steadily upon him, said, "when Mr. Sydenham took upon himself to guard me against the caprice of fashion, he should also have prepared me to expect the freedom of such an address, that I might have shunned a house, the master of which, dares to avow such principles of libertinism."—She immediately repaired to the table where Lady Merton
was

was engaged, by the side of whom she had not stood many moment, before she fell senseless on the floor, in a fainting fit.

The consternation became general, and Lady Merton's anxiety had almost reduced her to the same situation. By the assistance of hartshorn, Augusta at length recovered, but nearly relapsed again, on finding herself in the arms of Mr. Sydenham. Lady Merton entreated that chairs might be instantly sent for, and apologizing to Mrs. Sydenham, for leaving her before supper, departed with Augusta. She upbraided herself, for having been the cause, of taking Miss Denbeigh out, when she appeared so unwell; and when they got home, had her put directly to bed, and sat by her, until Augusta persuaded her, that she felt an inclination to sleep. She tried indeed to compose herself but could not; the transactions of the day, had agitated her frame too much; and it was not the in-
fult

sult she had received from Mr. Sydenham, which had alone reduced her to such a state, but the repetition of disagreeable occurrences. Now that she was left entirely to her own reflection, she began to view her unhappy situation in a stronger light than ever; unconscious of artifice, and therefore unprepared to oppose it, she saw all the dangers to which she was exposed. She had offended no one by an assuming demeanour, and her behaviour she was sure had been free from that levity, which encourages disrespect; yet she had met with mortifications, which the most arrogant pretensions could alone deserve, and encountered unwarranted freedoms, where she had expected to be treated with attention and regard. If such were the evils, which generally attended an intercourse with the fashionable world, how *small* a counterbalance, did its pleasures afford? If her own unprotected situation alone produced them, ought she not again to seek safety in obscurity? She reasoned with herself,

self, whether Lady Merton, should be made acquainted with Mr. Sydenham's conduct, or not. It pained her to give a check to the pleasant intercourse, which subsisted between their families, yet she thought she owed to her friend the discovery of such an insidious character; and in such perplexing reflections as these, did poor Augusta pass the night.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

AUGUSTA's penetration, although so newly exercised, had not deceived her. Miss Felton, who arrived at Mrs. Sydenham's a full hour before Lady Merton did, and probably with a design of disclosing it, related as she said, the whole history of Miss Denbeigh. She declared she had learnt from a relation of Lady Merton's that she was some low wretch, whom her Ladyship had been so romantic as to educate;
and

and added, she was sure she was an Hypocrite, and affected great reserve of manners, because she dared not do otherwise. This information, Mrs. Sydenham declared, "she could not have believed, if it had not been so well authenticated; but that Lady Merton had weaknesses which all her friends saw, at the same time that they overlooked, and pitied them." As for Mr. Sydenham, he could hardly conceal the satisfaction this recital gave him, and therefore left the discussion of it to the ladies, whilst he contemplated how he could best employ it to his own advantage. He had been struck with the beauty of Augusta from the first moment he had seen her; but not knowing her real situation with respect to Lady Merton, he had not dared to harbour designs, for which he might be made accountable, in a manner not altogether so pleasant to his feelings: but now that he found her unprotected, and a dependant, he harboured no doubt of his success, and had no fears which
could

could deter him from the attempt. His declarations had however been rather premature, for so skilful a practitioner, but they had been drawn from him by the observations he had made on Lord Euston, whom he plainly perceived to be devoted to Augusta, and who, he believed, could entertain no serious attachment for a girl of mean parentage, and a *toad-eater*.

Lady Merton entered Augusta's apartment on tip toe, and was surprised to find her up and dressed. She expressed concern at her having quitted her bed, and would hardly consent to her going down stairs to breakfast. "My dear Miss Denbeigh," said she, as they sat together, "I can no longer conceal the apprehensions I feel for you; you appear really ill, and something must be done for the recovery of your health."

"Since your Ladyship is so good as to
express

express so much solicitude for me, replied Augusta, "I will venture to own to you that I suspect I suffer from too much bustle, and keeping of late hours. If you will allow me to remain at home, whilst you partake of the amusements your friends hold out to you, I dare say I shall soon grow well."

"Whatever you think necessary to the re-establishment of your health," said Lady Merton, "I shall joyfully subscribe to, even tho' it deprives me of the pleasure of your society: but my dear, I should think a little quiet amusement would rather be of service to you, and you shall yourself dictate, what it must be.

"You are very good madam," replied Augusta, "but indeed it will be better for me to give up going abroad entirely."

"It is so extraordinary a wish at your age my love," said Lady Merton, "that I
can

can hardly think it originates in a want of health. I by no means desire to know any secrets, which you may not chuse to disclose; but if it is possible for me to mitigate the uneasiness which I see prays upon you; you may command me to the extent of my power."

"Dear Lady Merton," replied Augusta! "how your goodness affects me! Indeed I have not a secret I would withhold from you. It is true there are some circumstances, which do at present distress me. Lord Euston is a source of great uneasiness to me; and there is also a friend of your Ladyship's, whose conduct has particularly displeased me. Lord Euston," continued she, "during the visit he made to his uncle, declared a partiality to me, which I did the utmost in my power to check. I can feel no further regard to him, than what is due from me, to the nephew of Mr. Euston, and had I even ambition and pride to gratify, a connexion
6 with

with his family, is the last thing I should think of, since I know enough of the character of the Earl of Seaton, to be convinced, that he would look with contempt upon any woman, as a wife for his son, who united not all the splendid advantages of birth and fortune. Lord Euston," continued she, "has a good heart, but he is too thoughtless to judge of the consequences of his imprudence. His perseverance makes me unhappy, because I see that his health visibly declines; and it is dreadful to occasion misery one cannot relieve. He promised me last night, that I should hear no more of his passion; but I believe the best security I have for it, is to keep out of his way."

"You act with your usual good judgment, my dear Miss Denbeigh," said Lady Merton, "in declining, for the present, the addresses, of this young man. I know that his father is the most haughty, and ambitious
of

of men; and that Lord Euston would incur his everlasting displeasure, if he was to disappoint his views. His daughter by his first lady, who is a most charming woman, and who possessed a large fortune in right of her mother, had an attachment to Captain Amefely, nephew to the Earl of Mortimer; but he never would have given his consent to the match, had not the death, of Captain Amefely's two cousins put him in possession of the title and estate. I had a slight knowledge of the first Lady Seaton; she was a most beautiful woman, and it was said she had sacrificed another attachment, for his title; they lived I believe extremely unhappy for a few years, when she was supposed to have died of a broken heart. But," added she, "you have yet but half finished the confidential history, you are so good as to favour me with: you said another friend of mine, had contributed to make you unhappy."

"Yes, madam," replied Augusta, "and I
menti-

mentioned him with concern, because he is your friend : but I think I ought not to conceal from you, that Mr. Sydenham is capable of such dishonourable conduct."

"Mr. Sydenham," said Lady Merton, "is what the world calls a man of gallantry, but surely he has not dared to insult you, whilst you are under my protection?"

Augusta related all that had passed between them, and Lady Merton's astonishment only gave place to her resentment. She lamented that the contempt of an individual would be of no consequence to a man so generally received in the world, and declared she would never mix in society with him again, until Augusta hinted at the suspicions it might occasion to Mrs. Sydenham, whose domestic comfort it might for ever destroy. After a pause Lady Merton said, "I came to town to settle some business preparatory to the arrival of my son. It is finished,

finished, and I have no longer a motive to keep me in London. We will therefore immediately set out for the country, for indeed my sweet friend I cannot live without you! this will release us both from our embarrassments; and I hope restore your health. I have only to see Miss Merton, and prevail upon her to come to Merton Lodge after the birth day; and I will go directly, that we may take our departure to-morrow morning."

Augusta expressed her gratitude in the liveliest terms, and Lady Merton soon after left her.

She had not been gone long, before Colonel Beauclerc arrived. He seemed much shocked at the state in which he found Augusta; for the roses had forsaken her cheeks, and a sickly languor had taken possession of her features. His inquiries had all the tender solicitude of love, and in the full confi-

dence of success, he made an avowal of his passion, Augusta was soon sufficiently recollected to express her acknowledgements for the high honour he did her; and to assure him, that invincible obstacles prevented her acceptance of it. His affection was too fervent to be chilled by a first refusal, and he pleaded against it with all the eloquence which love is apt to inspire. Augusta's firmness at length convinced him that his hopes were unfounded, and he bade her a very melancholy adieu.

She now rang, to desire no more visitors might be let in; but her orders were given too late, for Lord Euston that moment entered the room.

"Oh Miss Denbeigh!" said he, "your countenance confirms the truth of the report I have just heard from Miss Felton. She has told me you were taken extremely ill at Mrs. Sydenham's last night."

"From some cause or other, probably the heat of the room, I fainted," replied Augusta."

"I fear," said he, "I was the unfortunate cause.—I not only awakened your sensibility on my own account, but revived in your memory so many painful ideas, that your gentle spirit sunk under them. But I will distress you no longer thus. I will quit England, and banish myself from you, until I find myself more worthy of being your friend. In the mean time you must give me leave to introduce you to my sister, Lady Mortimer. She will be proud of that title, and is already prepared to love, and admire you."

"The resolution you have taken, my Lord," replied Augusta, "is now unnecessary. I remove from town to-morrow morning, probably to visit it no more, and as there will be so little chance of our ever meeting again, I hope you will relinquish

the idea of exiling yourself from your friends. If any thing could tempt me to regret the suddenness of my departure, it would be the loss of the pleasure you have been so good as to prepare for me, in the proposed introduction to Lady Mortimer."

"Indeed!" said Lord Euston! do you leave town so very soon? Alas! much as I had prepared myself to quit you, this separation seems a final blow to my peace. May I ask whither you are going? and what occasions so sudden a departure."

"Lady Merton," replied Augusta, "thinks that my health will be restored by a change of air, and kindly proposes to take me into the country with her. Her solicitude for me is so flattering, that she has determined our excursion shall take place without delay."

"Oh!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Lord Euston, "may health, and every other happiness attend you: but a foreign climate must be my refuge. When we meet again, I hope to bring you acquainted with my sister; but until that period arrives, you must promise me to look upon this some times, that you may not forget your unhappy friend." As he spoke, he presented a beautiful watch to Augusta.

"Indeed," replied she, "I shall need no memento to recall the remembrance of you. You are now too high in my opinion for me ever to forget you; but the watch I cannot receive.

"Here is the one you gave me of my uncle's," said he, taking it from his pocket, "and I value it beyond any thing that money can purchase. You will either deprive me of this treasure, or take a bauble
for

for which I have no use. One of them I positively leave behind me."

"If that be my only alternative," said Augusta, "I will take that which you wish me, and if it will give you pleasure, I promise you it shall be my constant companion."

He kissed her hand, and unable to express more than an inarticulate farewell, hastily left her.

When Lady Merton returned she found Augusta in tears. She kindly strove to dissipate them, and with a smile told her, that she had escaped a rencounter that morning, which would have involved her in much deeper distress. This was no other than a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Sydenham, who had called separately at Lady Merton's, and been denied, in consequence of Augusta's orders.

The ladies took leave of each other, at
an

an early hour, having agreed to be in the carriage by six o'clock ; and Augusta, who had received such a small portion of pleasure from her visit to London, joyfully prepared to quit it.

END OF VOL. I.

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